

Graduate Weather and Storm Spotter Class

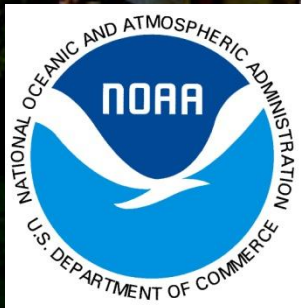
Kevin Laws

Meteorologist

Please dial 1-866-231-8384

Passcode: 2056215645#

For the audio.



U.S. Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service – Birmingham, AL



Questions or Comments?

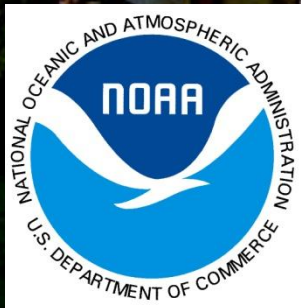


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A survey will follow this presentation, please submit feedback so we can improve this presentation!



U.S. Department of Commerce

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National Weather Service – Birmingham, AL

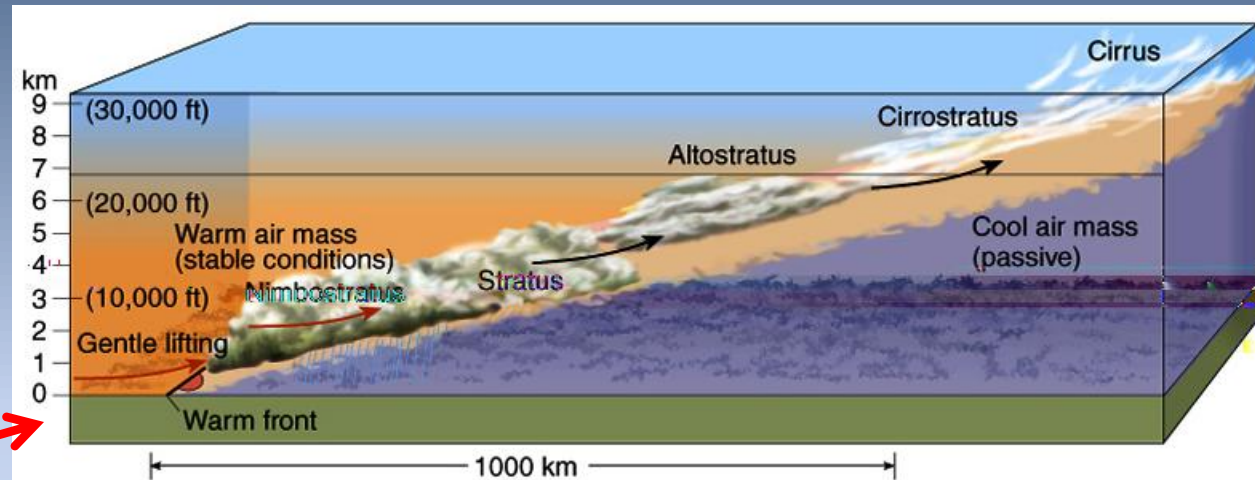
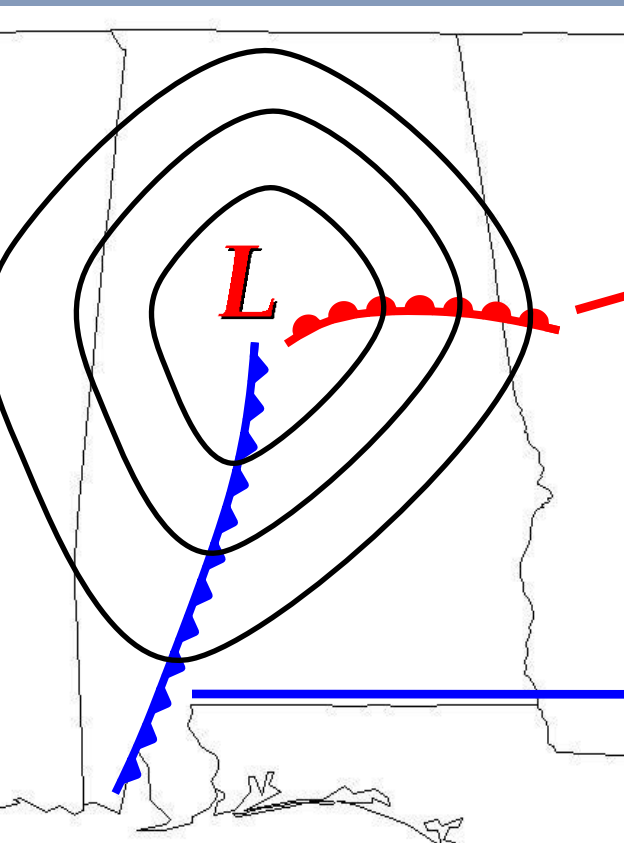


Welcome to the Graduate Spotter Class

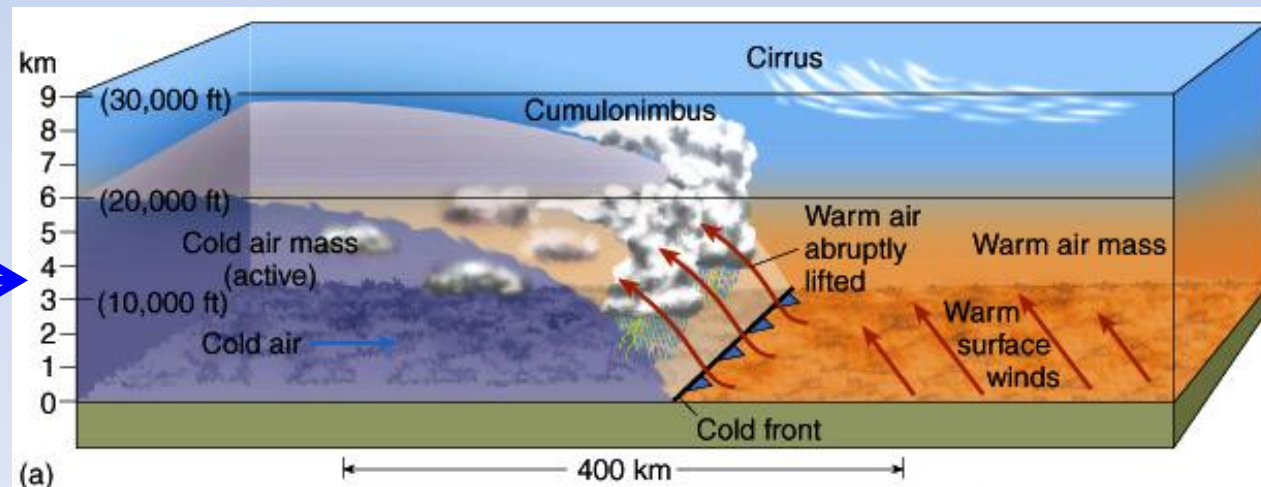
What we will attempt to cover in this class:

- Advanced weather concepts including a 3-D look at the atmosphere.
- Instability versus Wind Shear – Finding the perfect balance. How do you arrive at the mode of convection in the forecast?
- The ‘why’ of what you observe when storm spotting.
- Spotting recognition quiz
- Warning scenario: what we see from the NWS perspective and why we need effective spotter reports.

The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

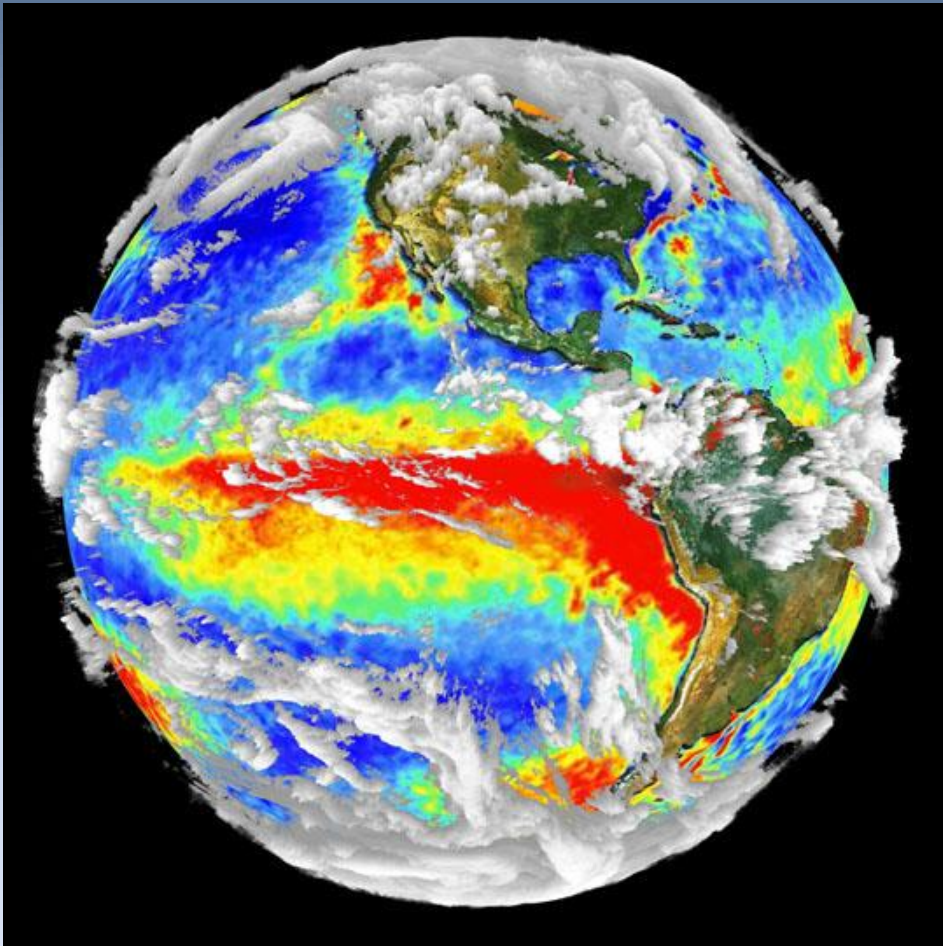


Warm Front



Cold Front

The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere



Thunderstorms

- Instability
- Moisture
- Lift Mechanism

Severe

- Instability
- Wind Shear

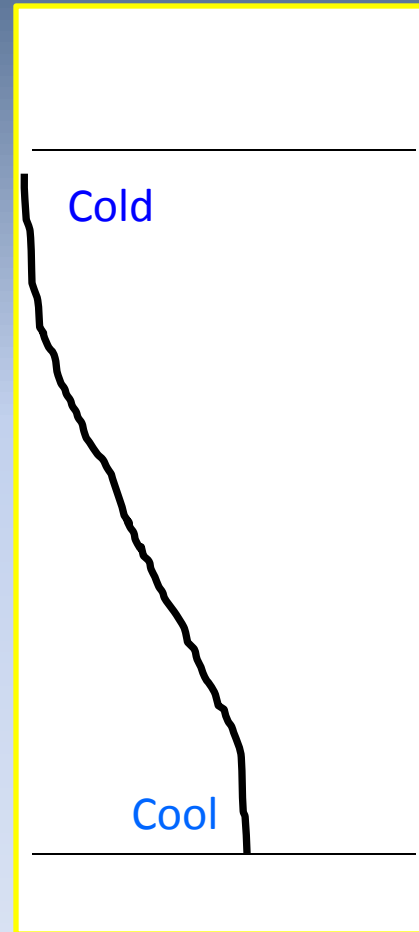
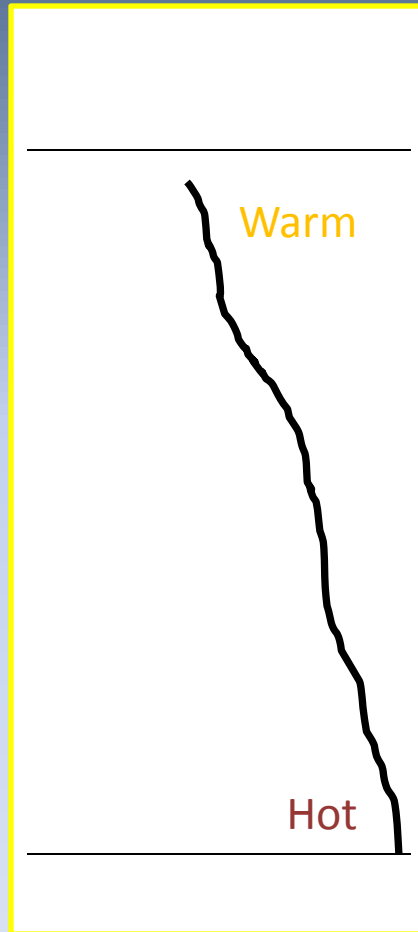
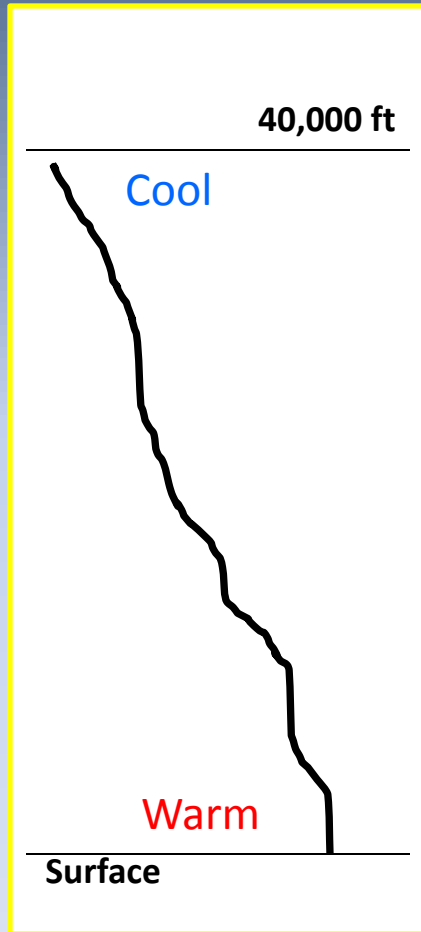
The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Instability




General

Summer

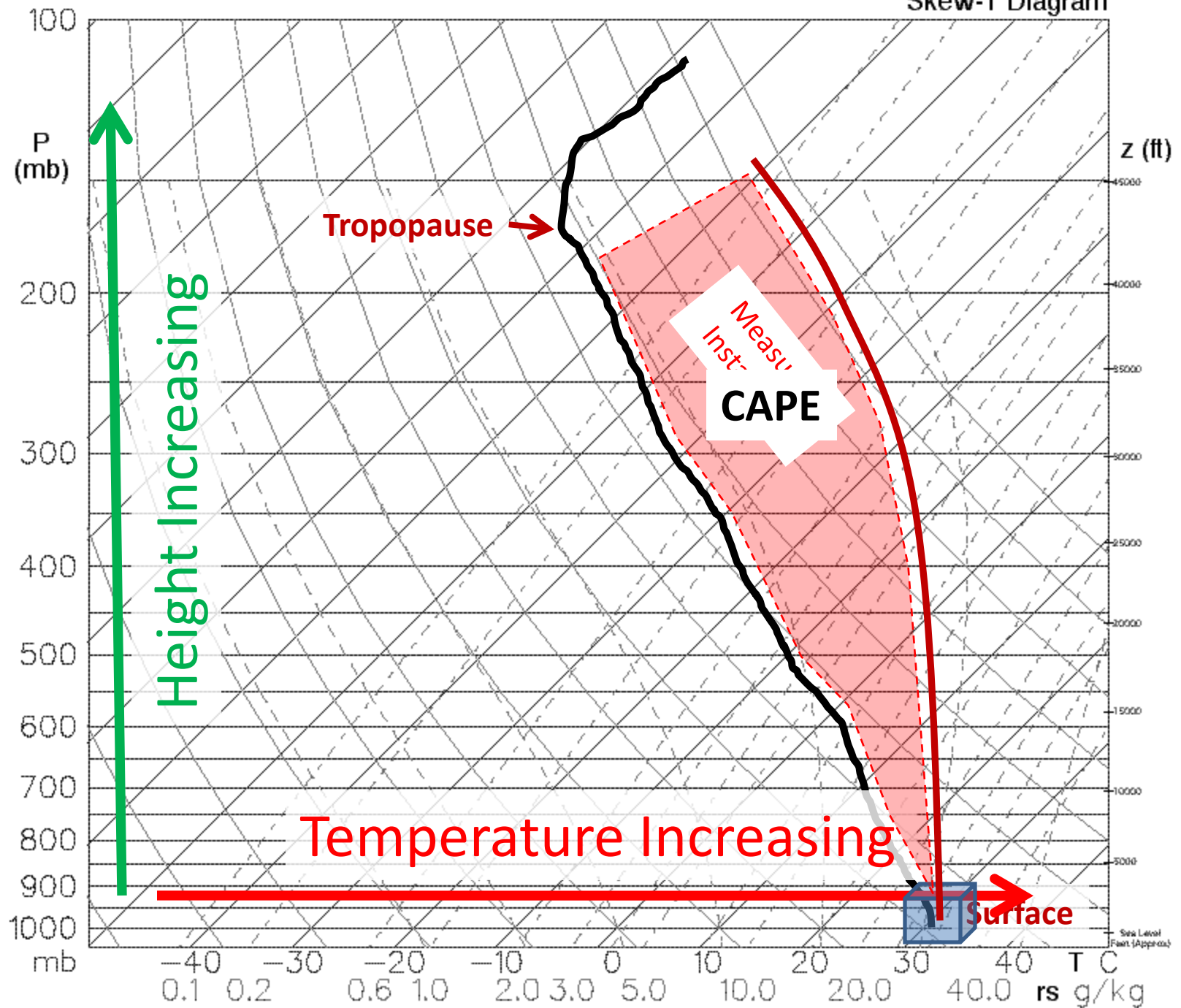
Winter



- In basic terms, the instability of the atmosphere is measured based upon how warm it is at the surface versus how cold it is aloft.
- In general, the atmosphere gets colder as you go up.
- During the summer, it is a lot hotter at the surface, but it also warm aloft
- In the winter it is colder at the surface, but it is also colder in the upper atmosphere, as well.
- How is the instability calculated?

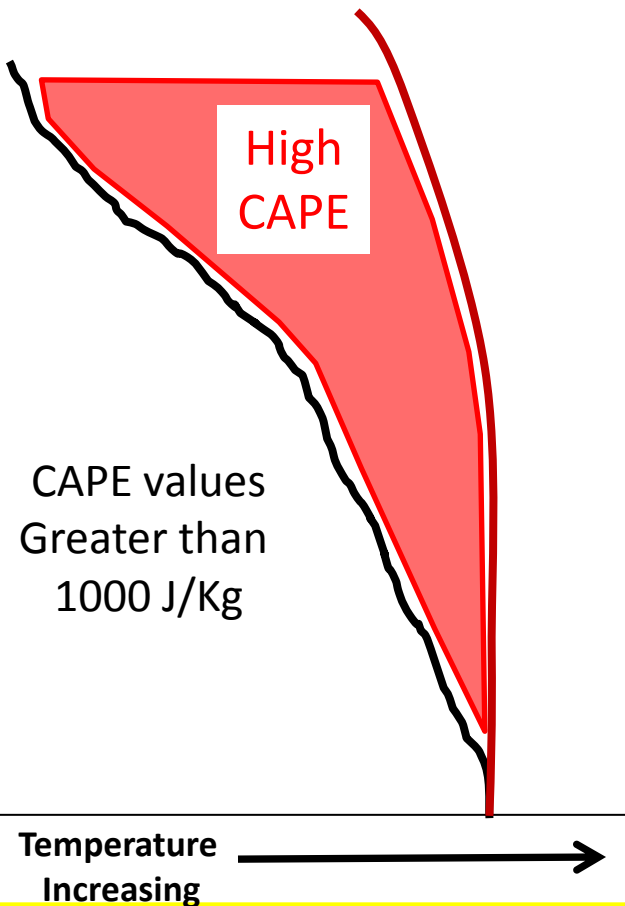
Temperature 
Increasing

Skew-T Diagram

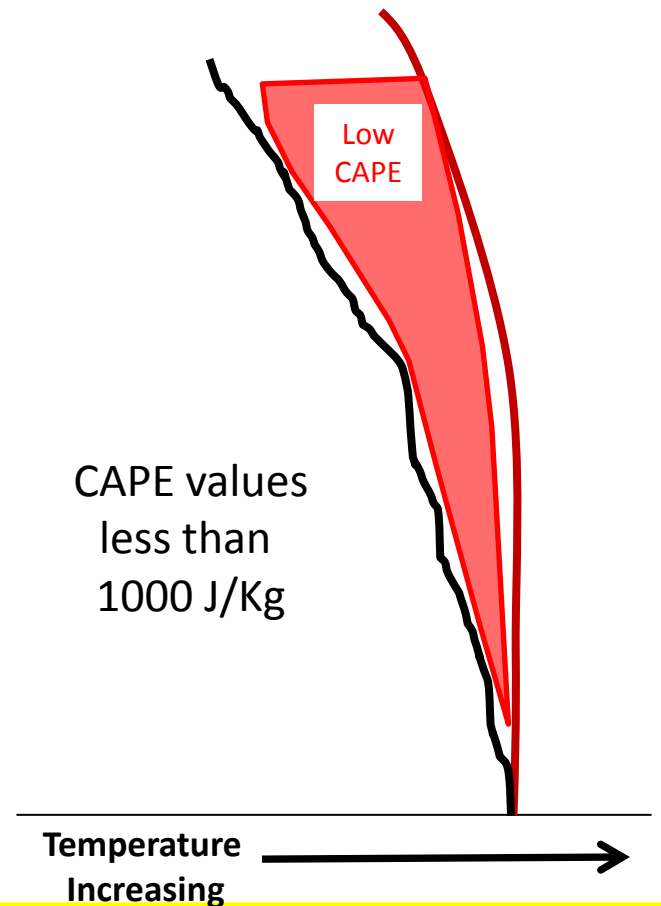


The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Instability

Hot Surface/Cold Aloft

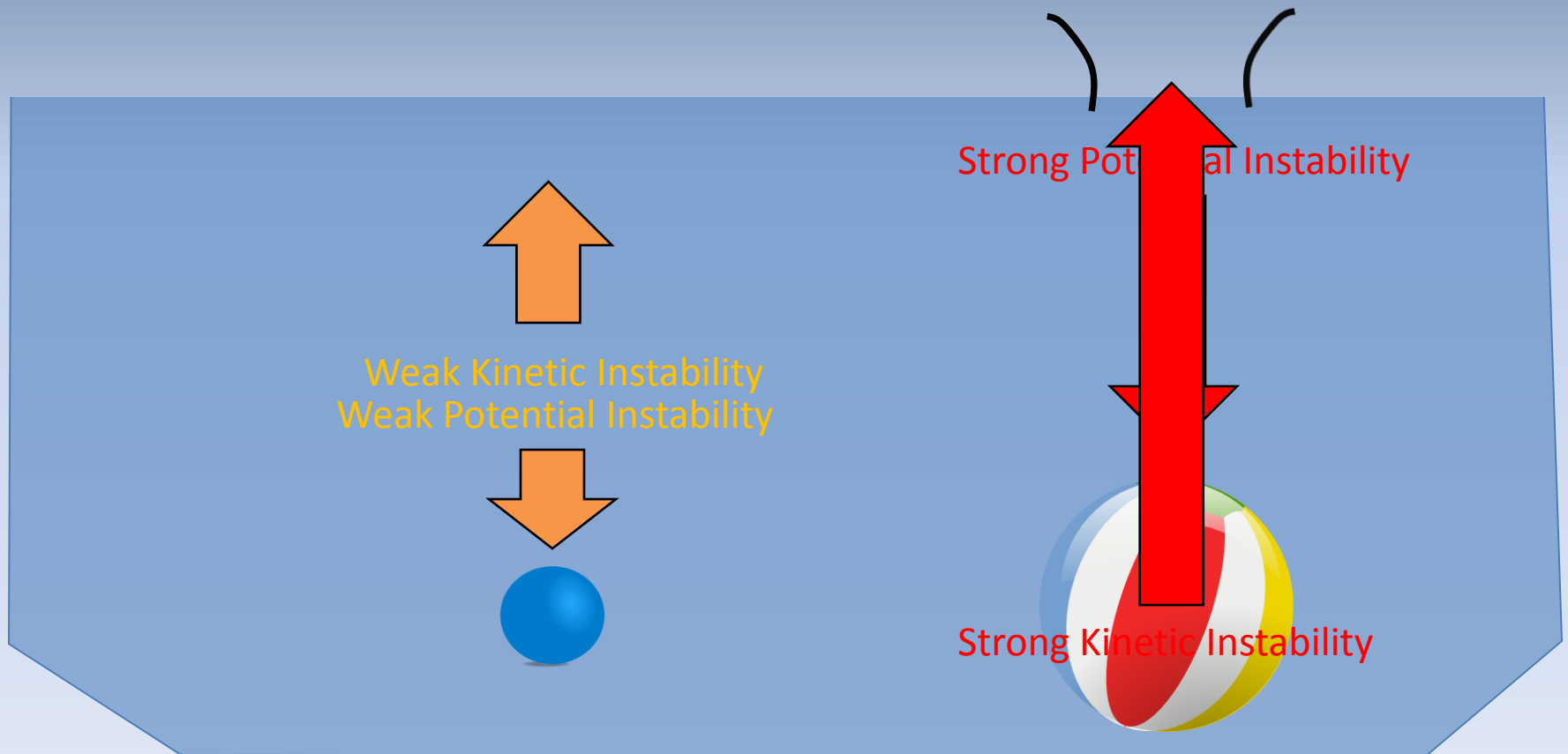


Hot Surface/Warm Aloft



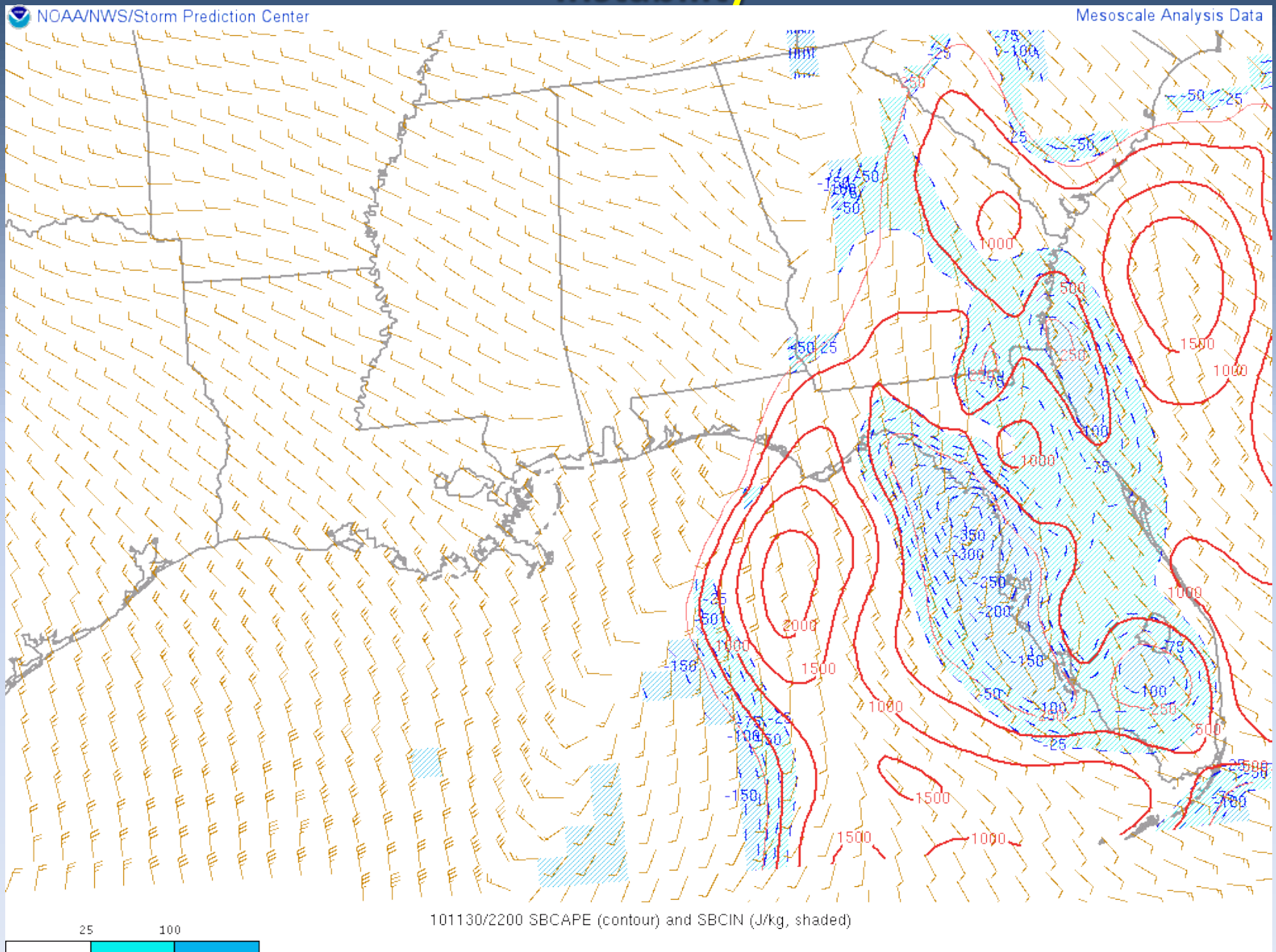
- CAPE stands for the **C**onvective **A**vailable **P**otential **E**nergy
- Depending on what type of CAPE exists (tall, short, skinny, fat) will determine the type and amount of thunderstorms that are possible (potential).

The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Instability

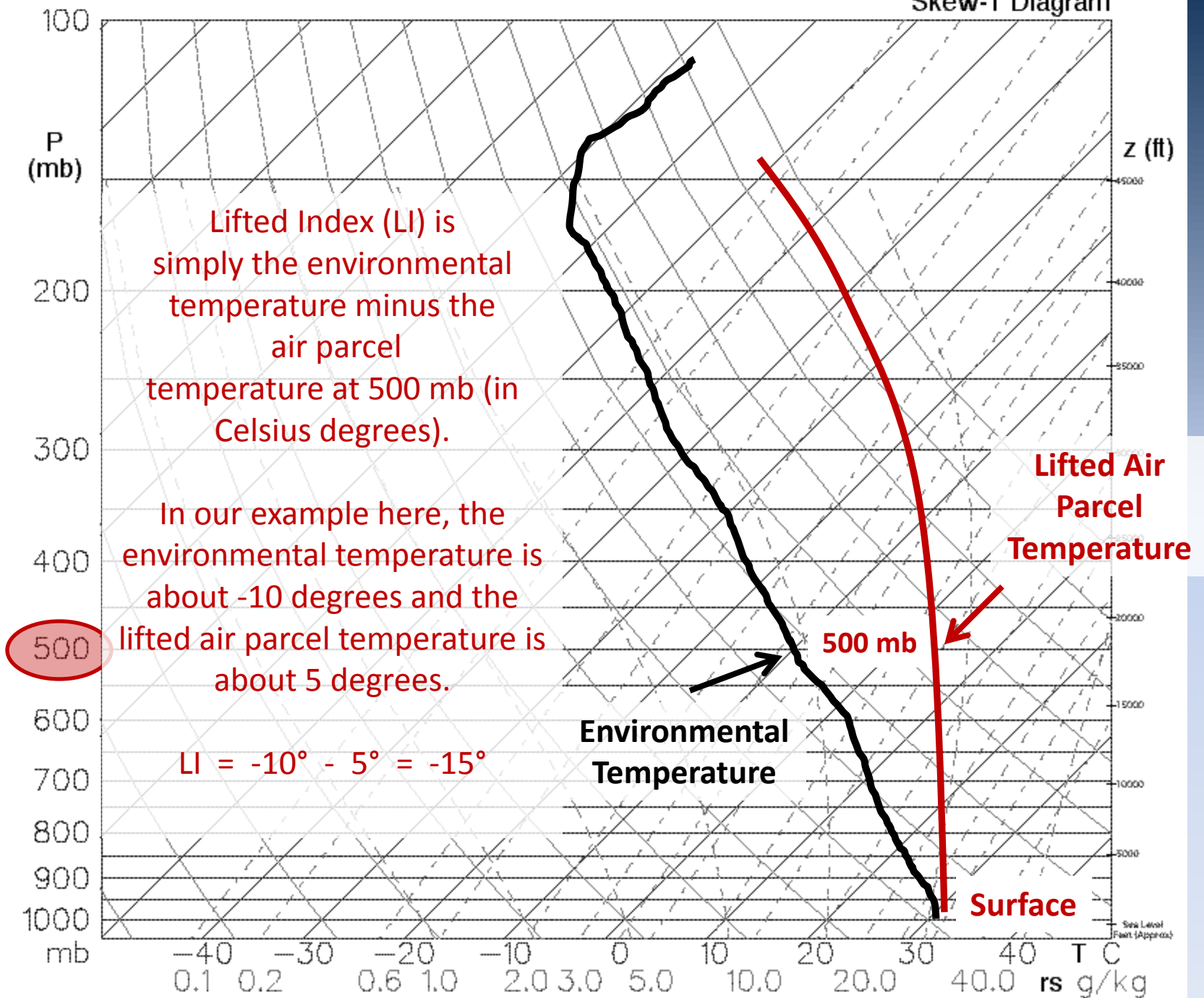


The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

Instability



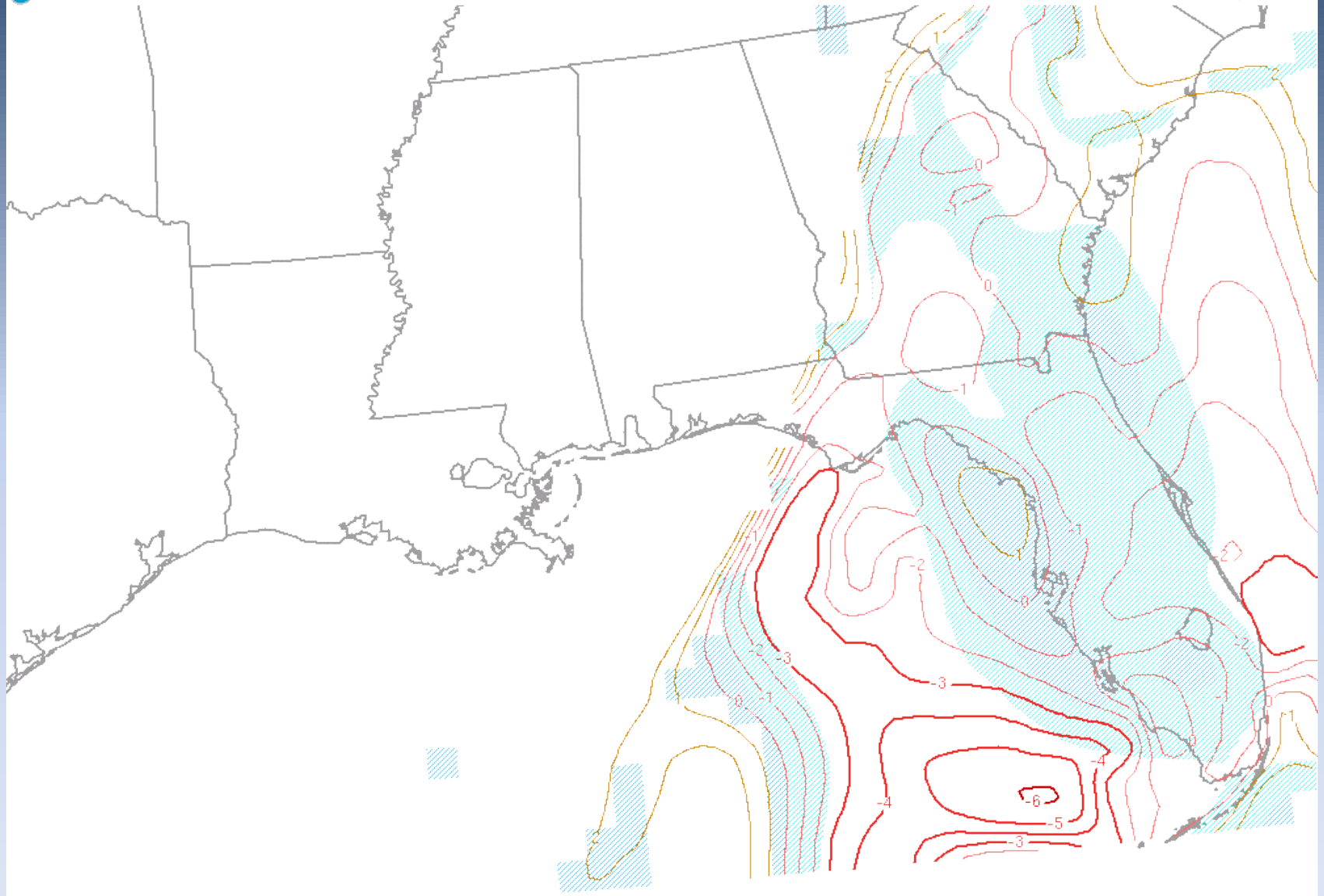
Skew-T Diagram



The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Instability

NOAA/NWS/Storm Prediction Center

Mesoscale Analysis Data

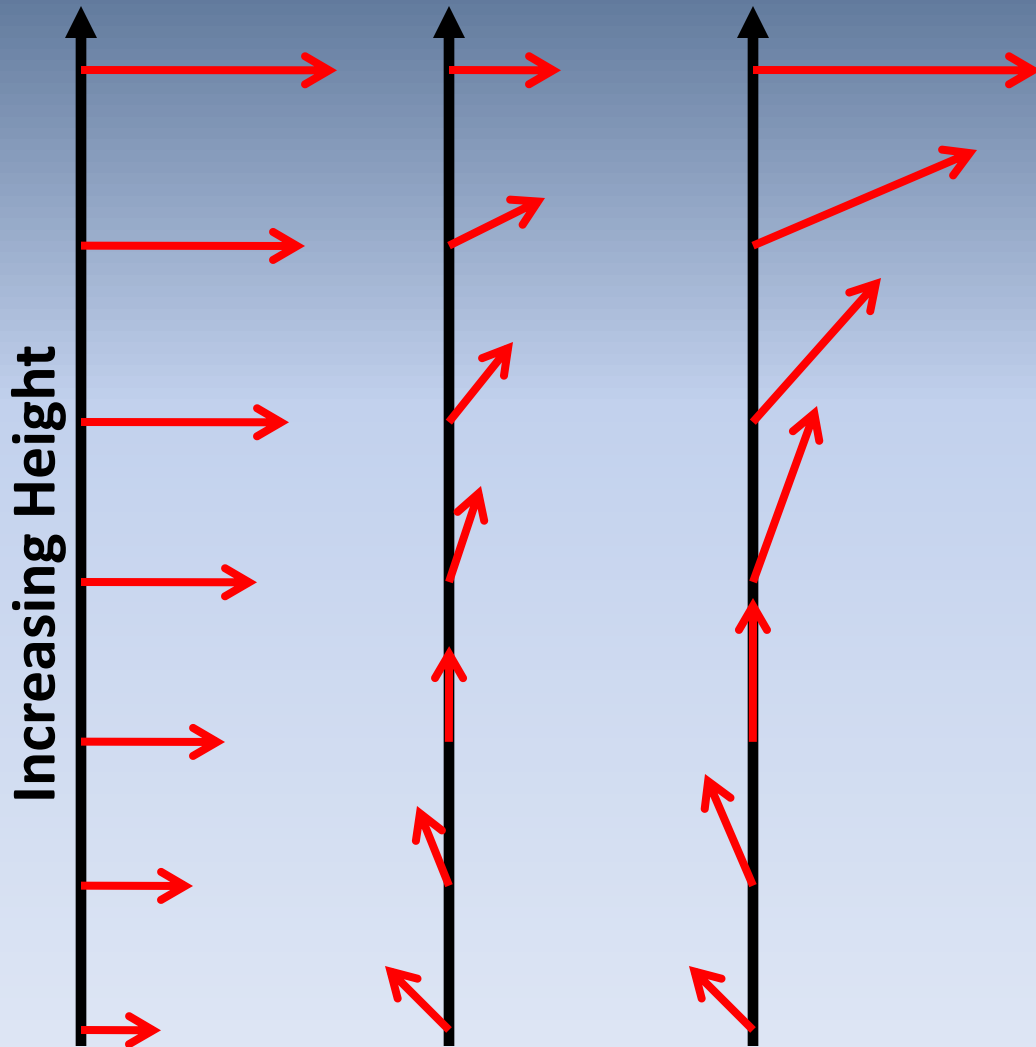


101130/2200 SB LI (500 mb) and SBCIN (J/kg, shaded at 25 and 100)



The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

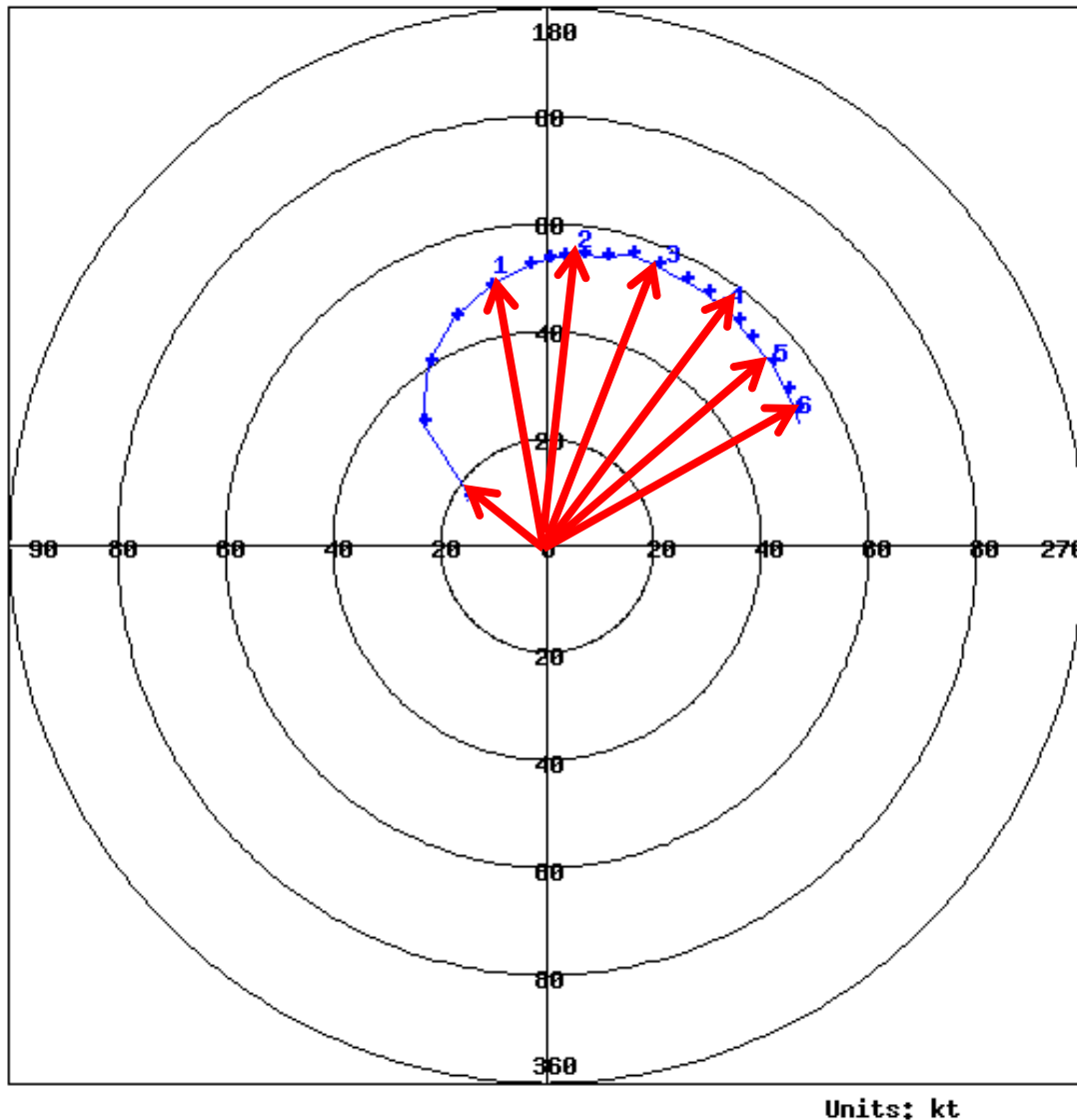
Wind Shear



- Wind shear can be calculated in three ways
- Change in wind speed with height
- Change in wind direction with height
- Change in both speed and direction with height

The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

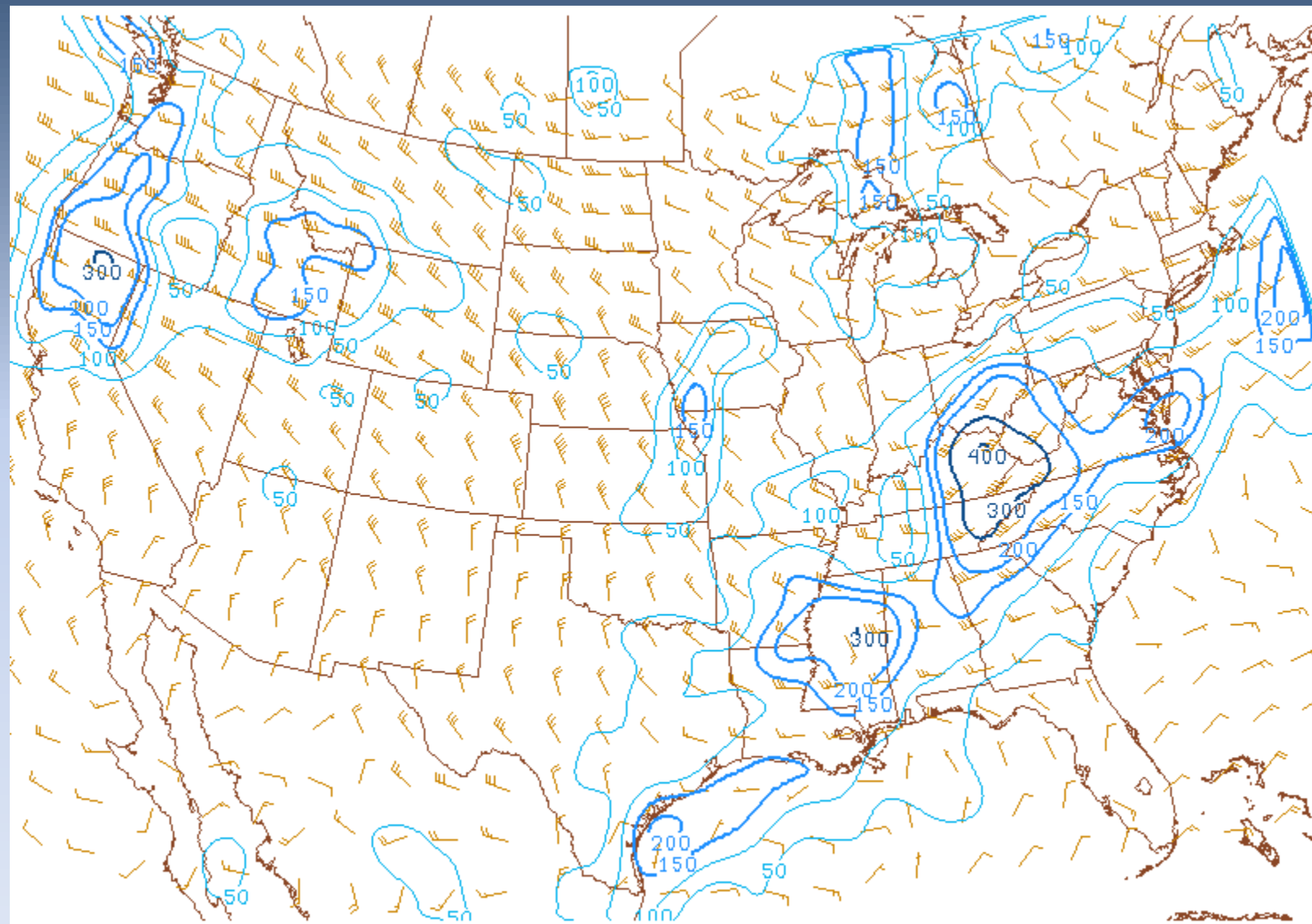
Wind Shear



- Wind speed is typically calculated in terms of speed and direction change in the term **Helicity** or **Storm Relative Helicity**.
- Helicity is measured at several height levels, and that determines what type of storm is likely to form or what the **mode of convection** will be.
- 0 to 6 kilometers (storm motions)
- 0 to 3 km (supercells, multicell, or ordinary cell?)
- 0 to 1 km (tornadoes?)

The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

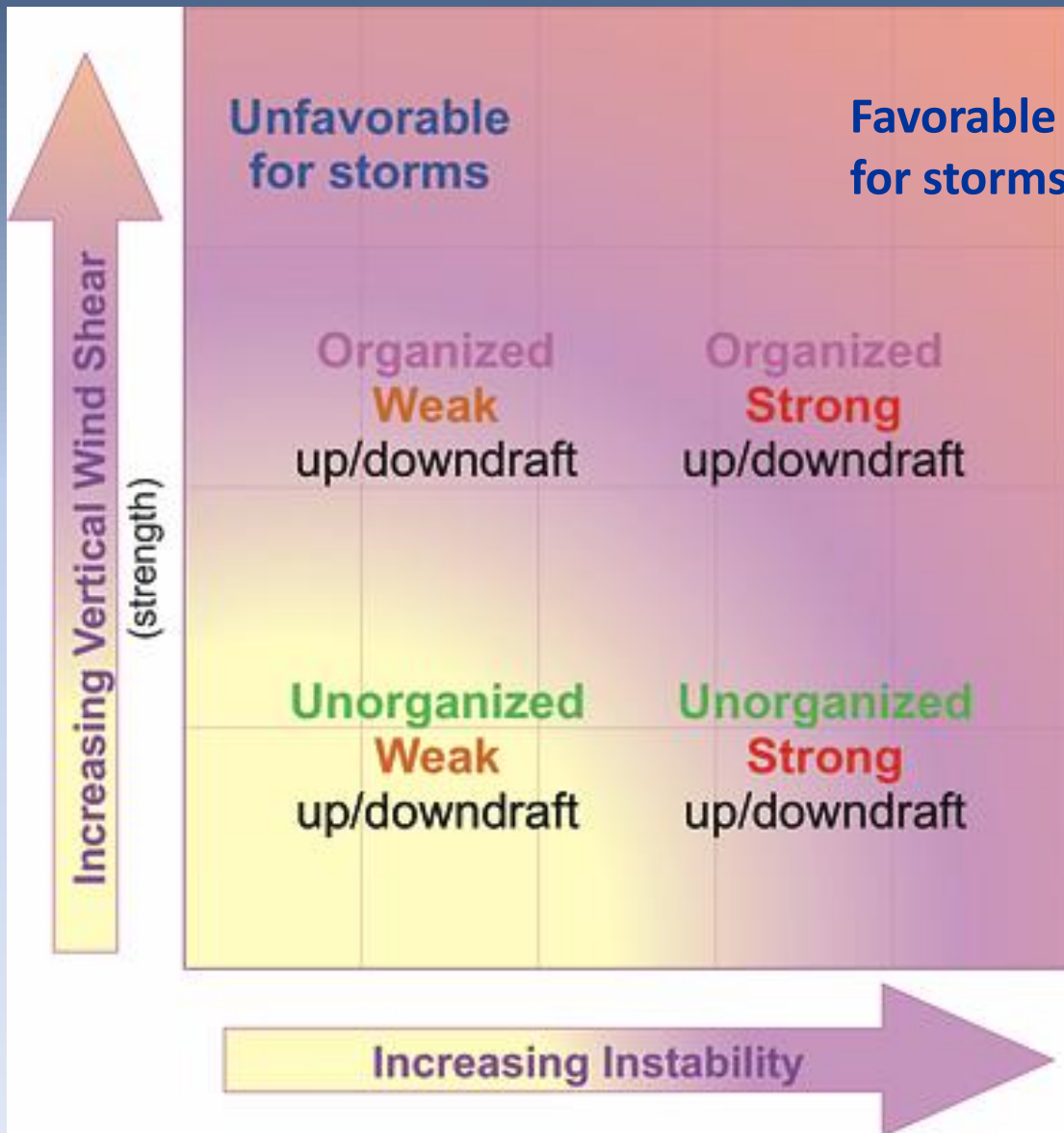
Wind Shear



090506/1900 0-1 km SRH (m^2/s^2) and storm motion (kt)

Finding the Perfect Balance

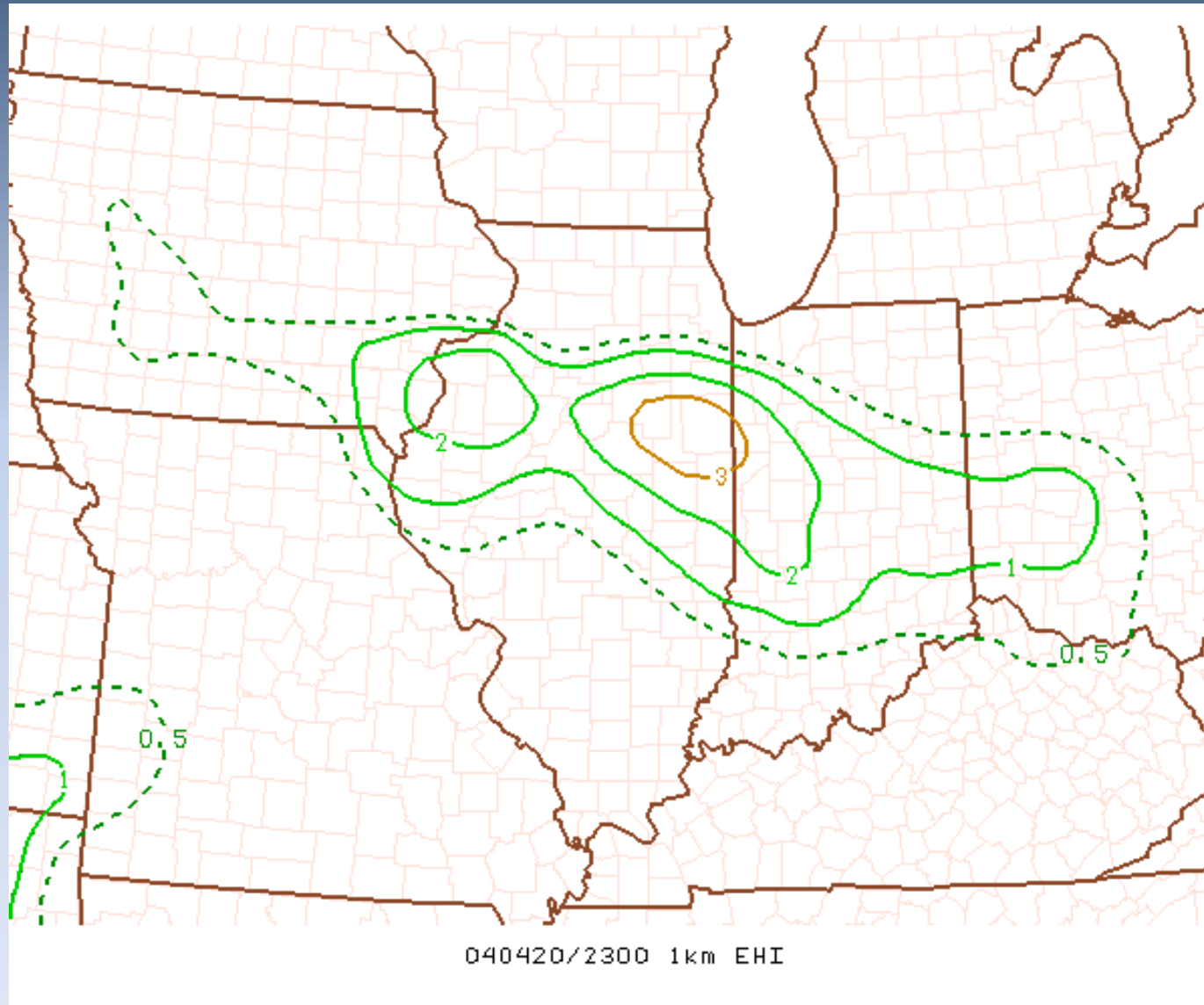
Instability versus Wind Shear



- Finding the perfect balance between instability and wind shear remains a forecast challenge.
- All about the favorable **mode of convection**.

Finding the Perfect Balance

Instability versus Wind Shear



- Certain products like the **Energy Helicity Index** (EHI) can help you determine the mode of convection.
- EHI > 4 Watch Out!
- EHI 1 – 3 marginal
- EHI < 1 low

Finding the Perfect Balance Instability versus Wind Shear

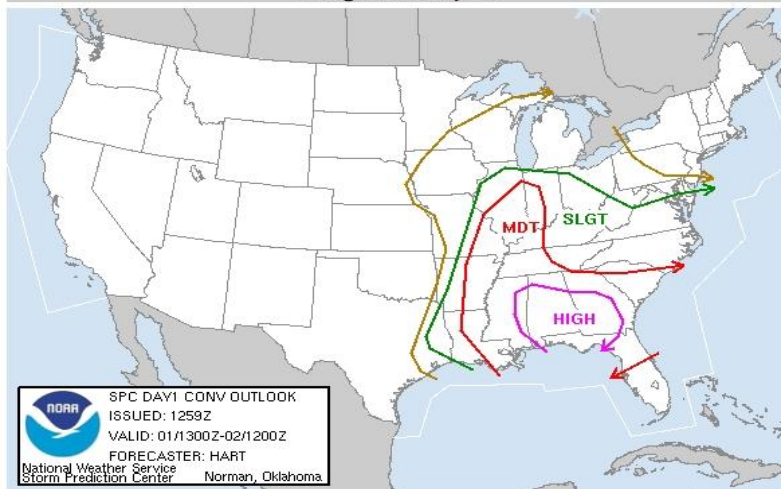
Mar 1, 2007 1300 UTC Day 1 Convective Outlook

Updated: Thu Mar 1 13:04:14 UTC 2007
Probabilistic to Categorical Outlook Conversion Table (Effective Feb 14, 2006).

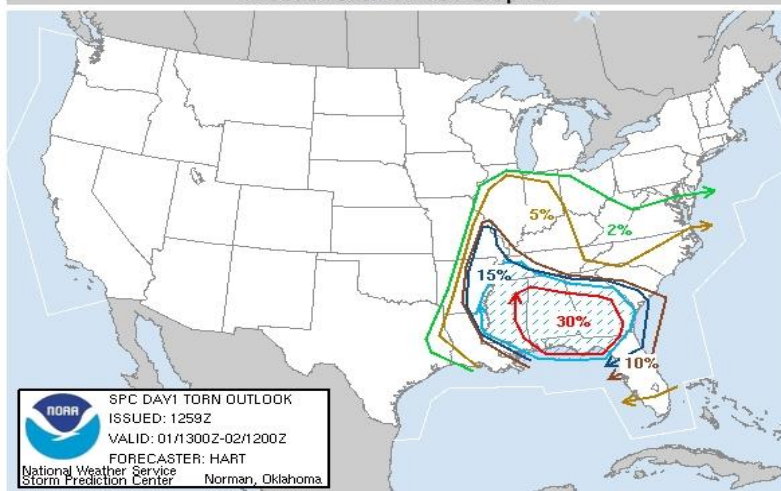
Public Severe Weather Outlook

The SPC is forecasting. Please read the latest public statement about this event.

Categorical Graphic



Probabilistic Tornado Graphic



Probability of a tornado within 25 miles of a point.

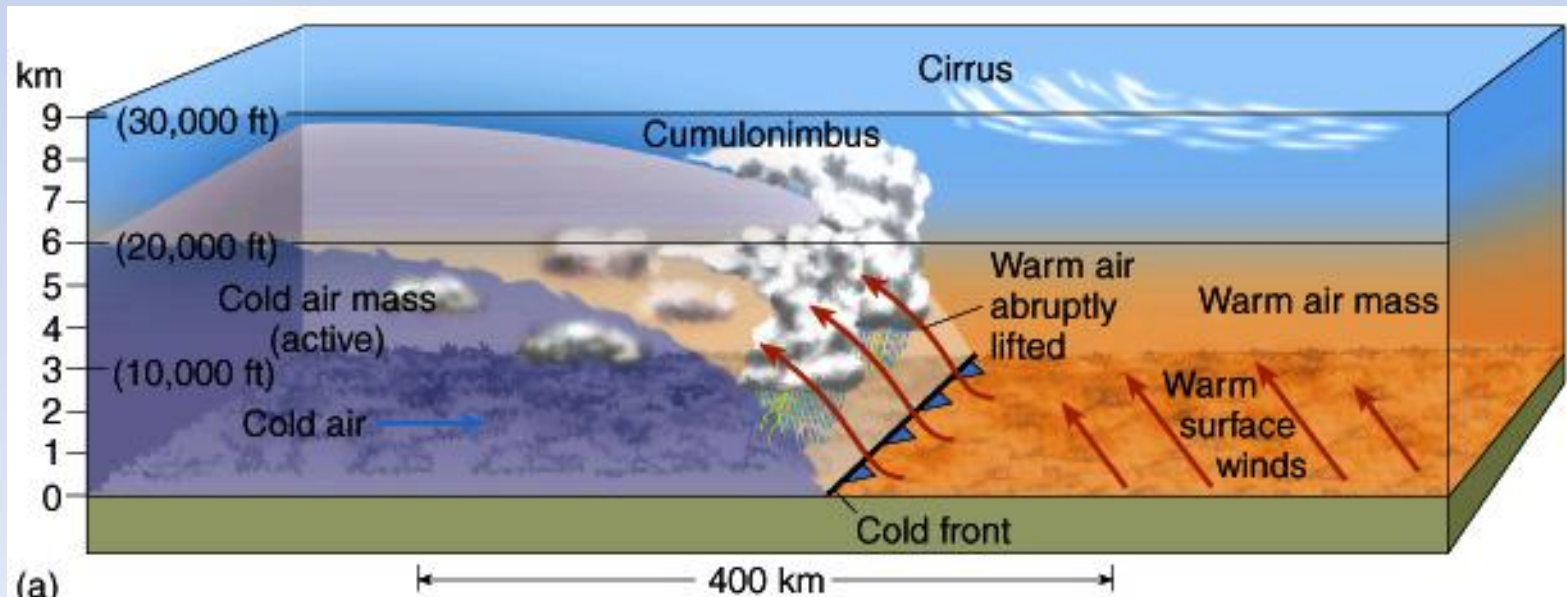
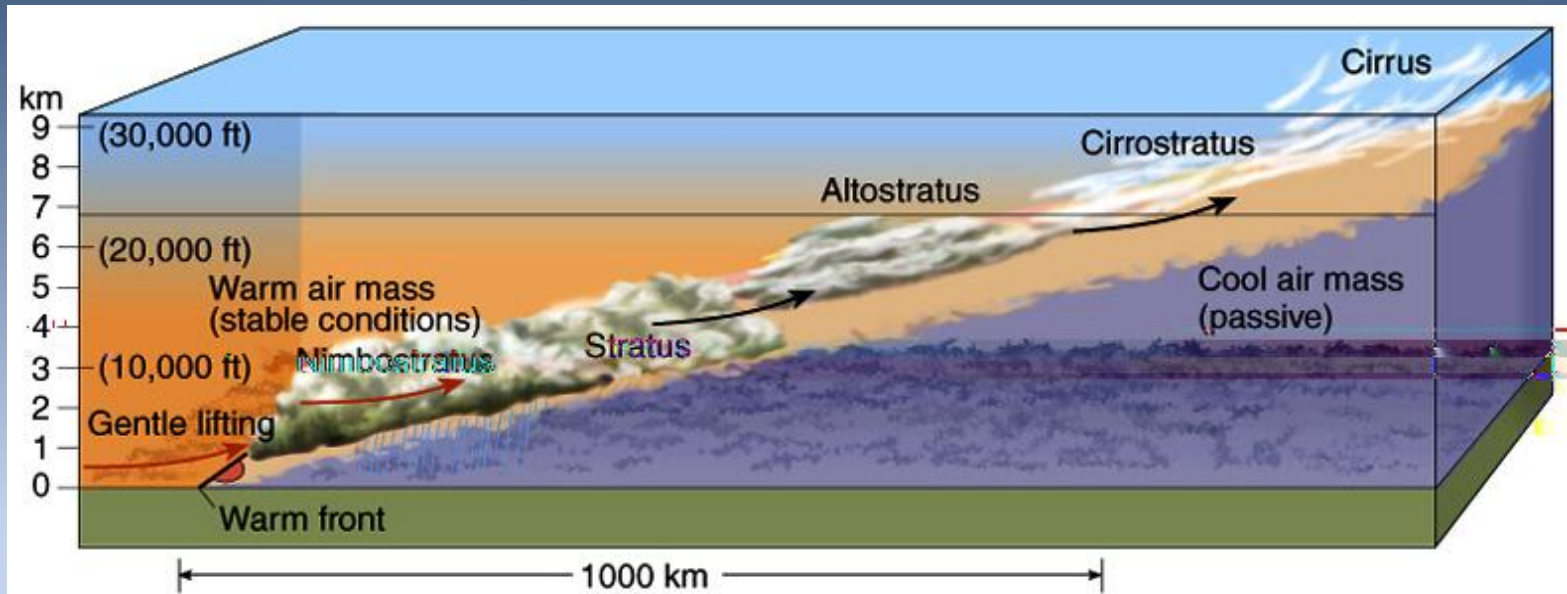
Hatched Area: 10% or greater probability of EF2 - EF5 tornadoes within 25 miles of a point.

DAY 1 CONVECTIVE OUTLOOK NWS STORM
PREDICTION CENTER NORMAN OK
0659 AM CST THU MAR 01 2007

...GULF COAST REGION...

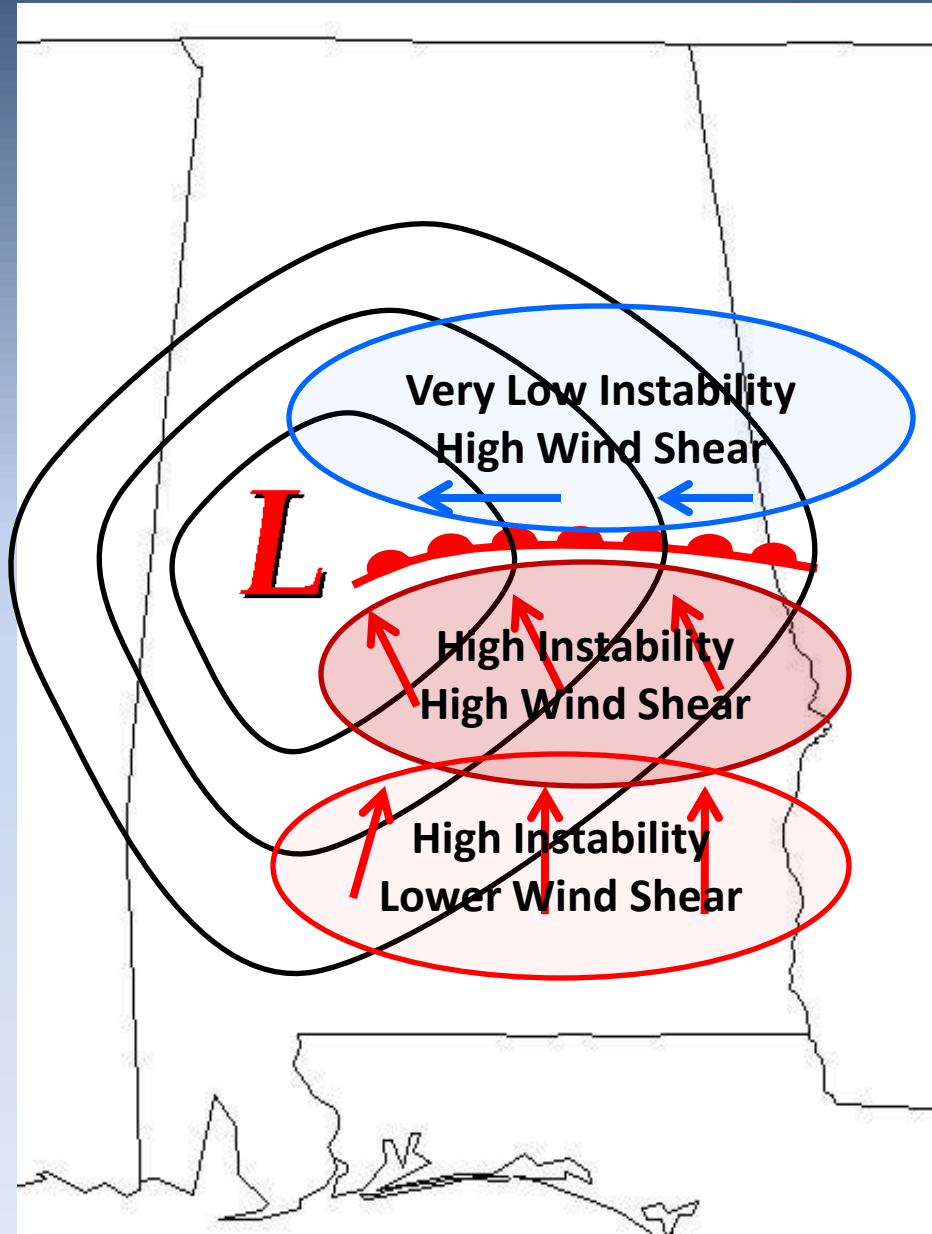
PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT SCATTERED THUNDERSTORMS WILL DEVELOP OVER EASTERN LA AND MS BY MID MORNING...AHEAD OF UPPER TROUGH. THIS REGION WILL BE VERY MOIST AND UNSTABLE WITH **MLCAPE VALUES OVER 1000 J/KG** EXPECTED. VERY IMPRESSIVE **VERTICAL SHEAR PROFILES** ARE IN PLACE AND WILL ONLY STRENGTHEN THROUGH THE DAY. THIS WILL RESULT IN VERY FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR TORNADIC SUPERCELLS CAPABLE OF STRONG/ VIOLENT TORNADOES...LARGE HAIL...AND DAMAGING WINDS. THIS ACTIVITY WILL LIKELY SPREAD EASTWARD ACROSS PARTS OF AL/GA AND INTO NORTHERN FL THROUGH THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING. RAPID MOVEMENT OF UPPER TROUGH...STRENGTH OF WIND FIELDS...AND QUALITY OF RETURNING LOW LEVEL MOISTURE ALL POINT TO THE POTENTIAL FOR AN OUTBREAK OF TORNADOES TODAY.

The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Lifting Mechanism



The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

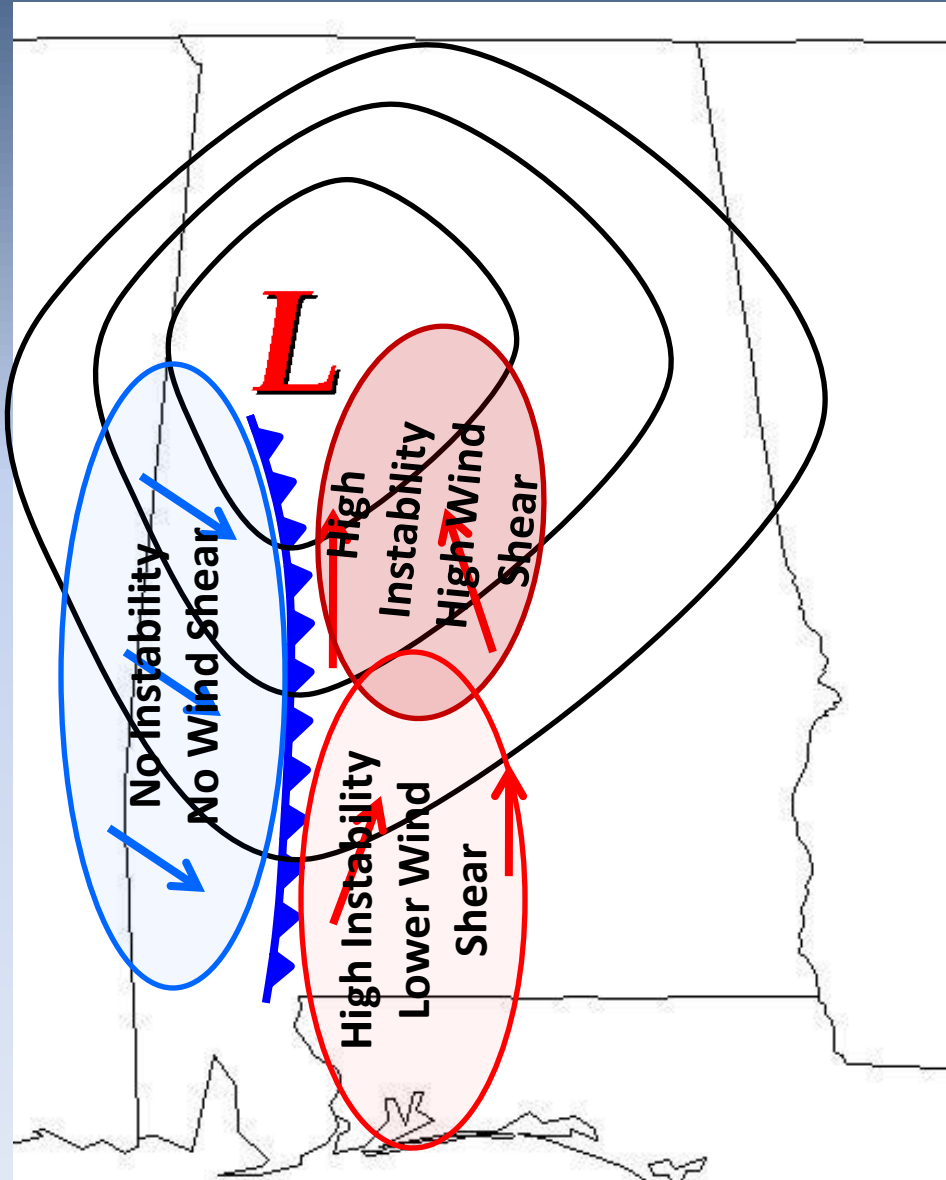
Warm Front



- Warm fronts are typically characterized by a distinct wind-shift from the south to the east as you go from south to north.
- South of the warm front the airmass is unstable with high wind shear.
- North of the warm front the wind shear can remain high, but the instability decreases significantly.

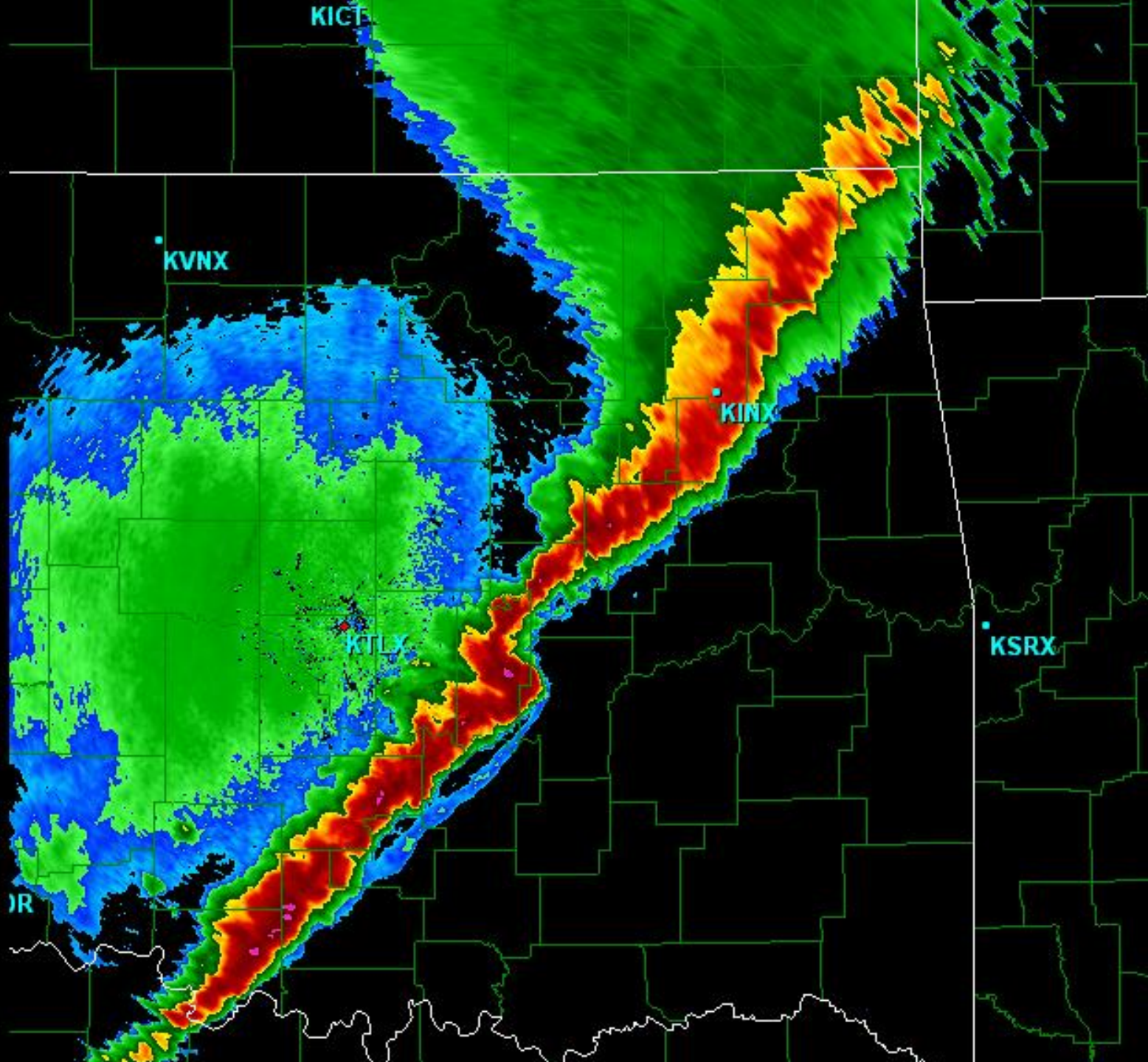
The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere

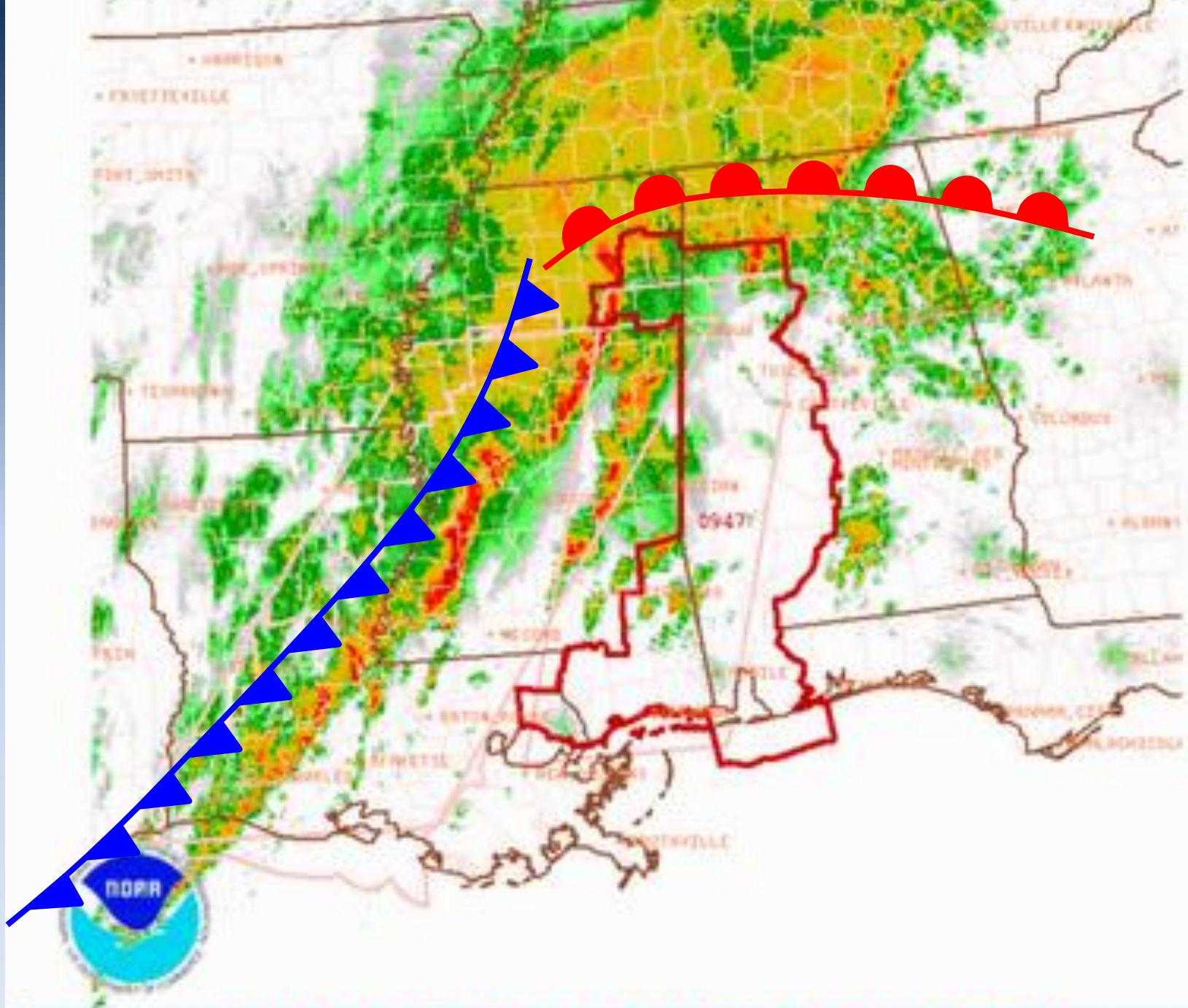
Cold Front



- Cold Fronts are characterized by an abrupt wind-shift from the south to the northwest as you go from west to east.
- Ahead of the cold front, generally there is unstable air with high wind shear.
- Behind the cold front the air is colder, drier and virtually no instability or wind shear.

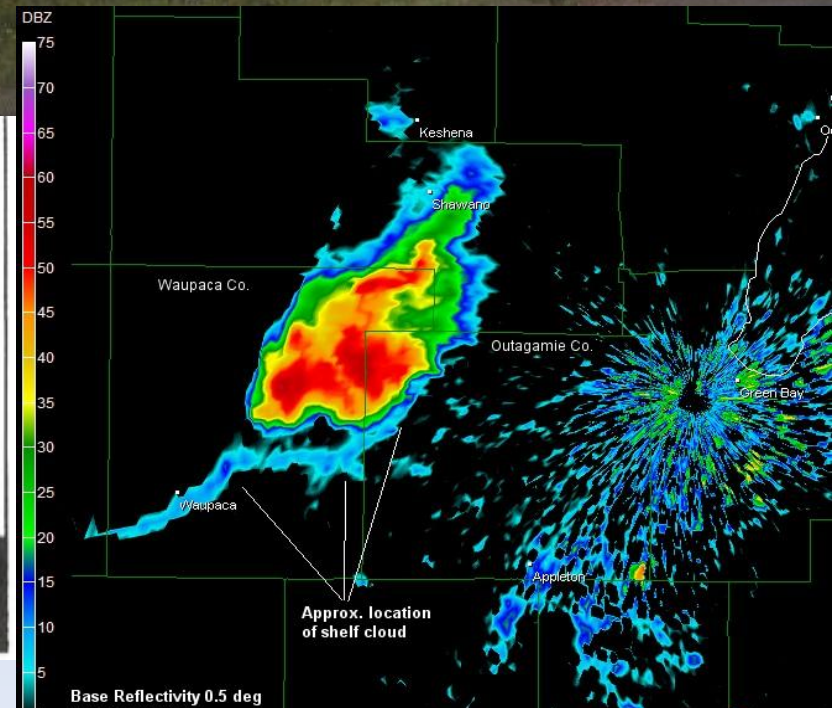
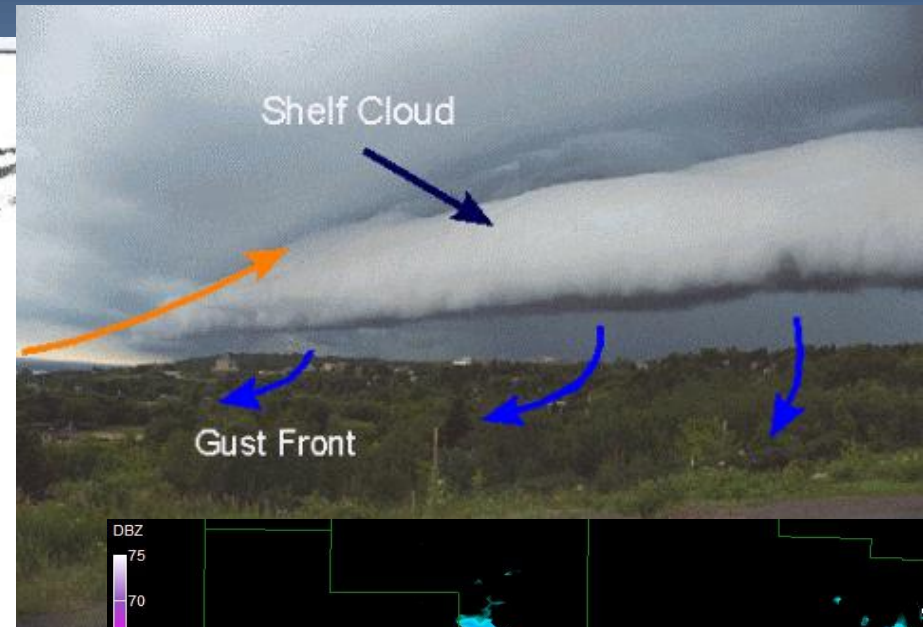
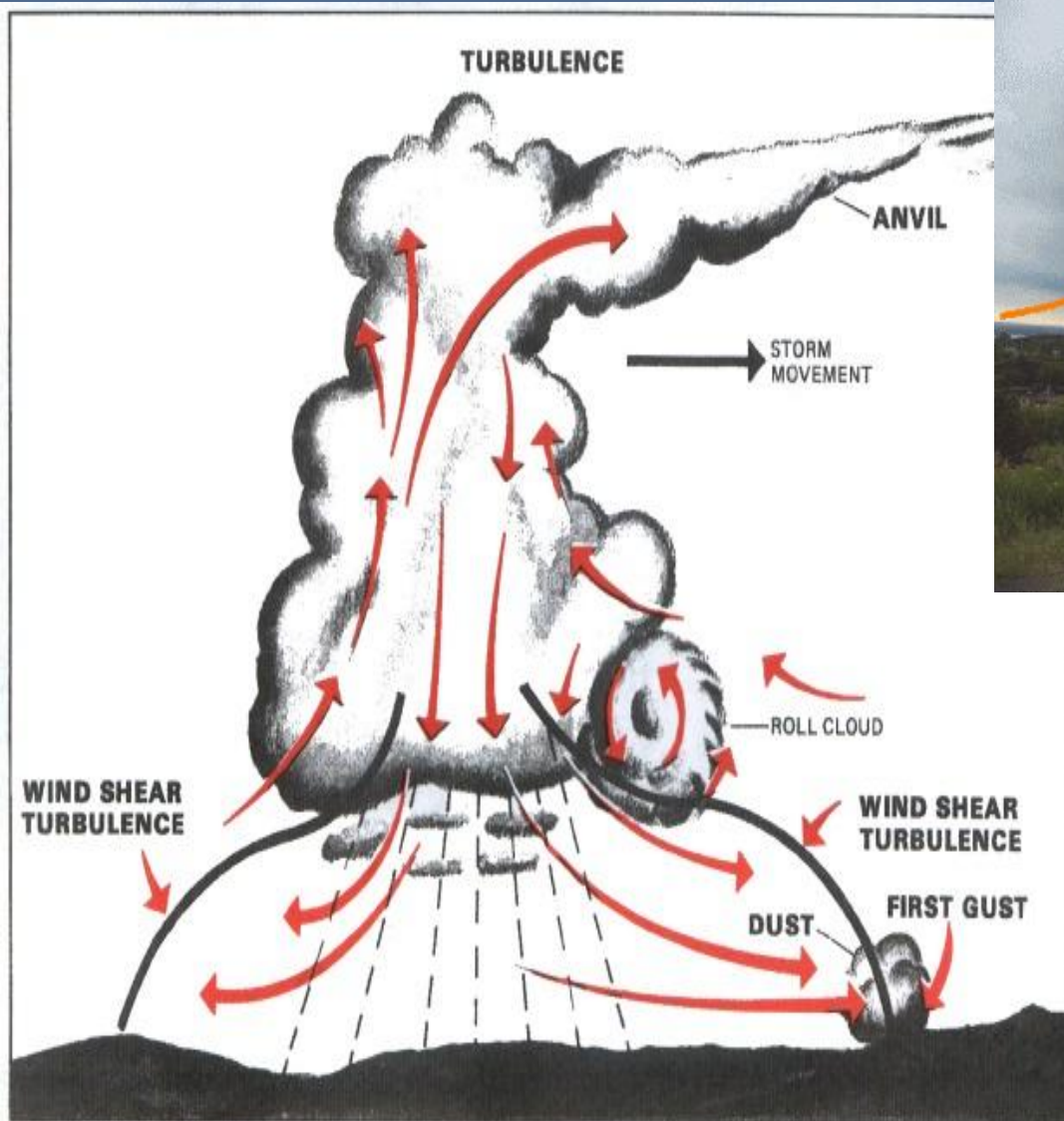
DBZ



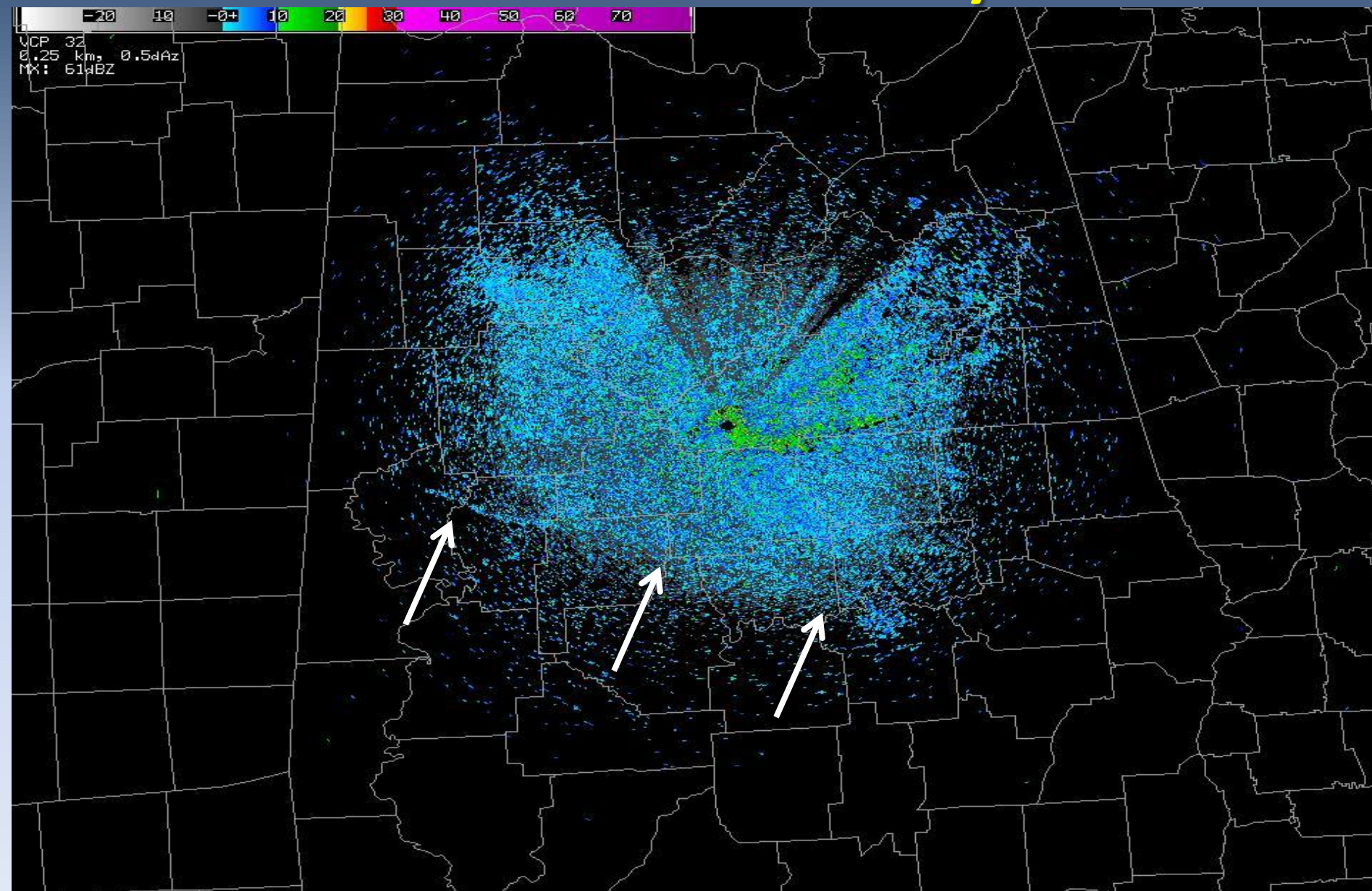


Tornado Watch # 947 - Valid from 805 PM until 300 AM CST

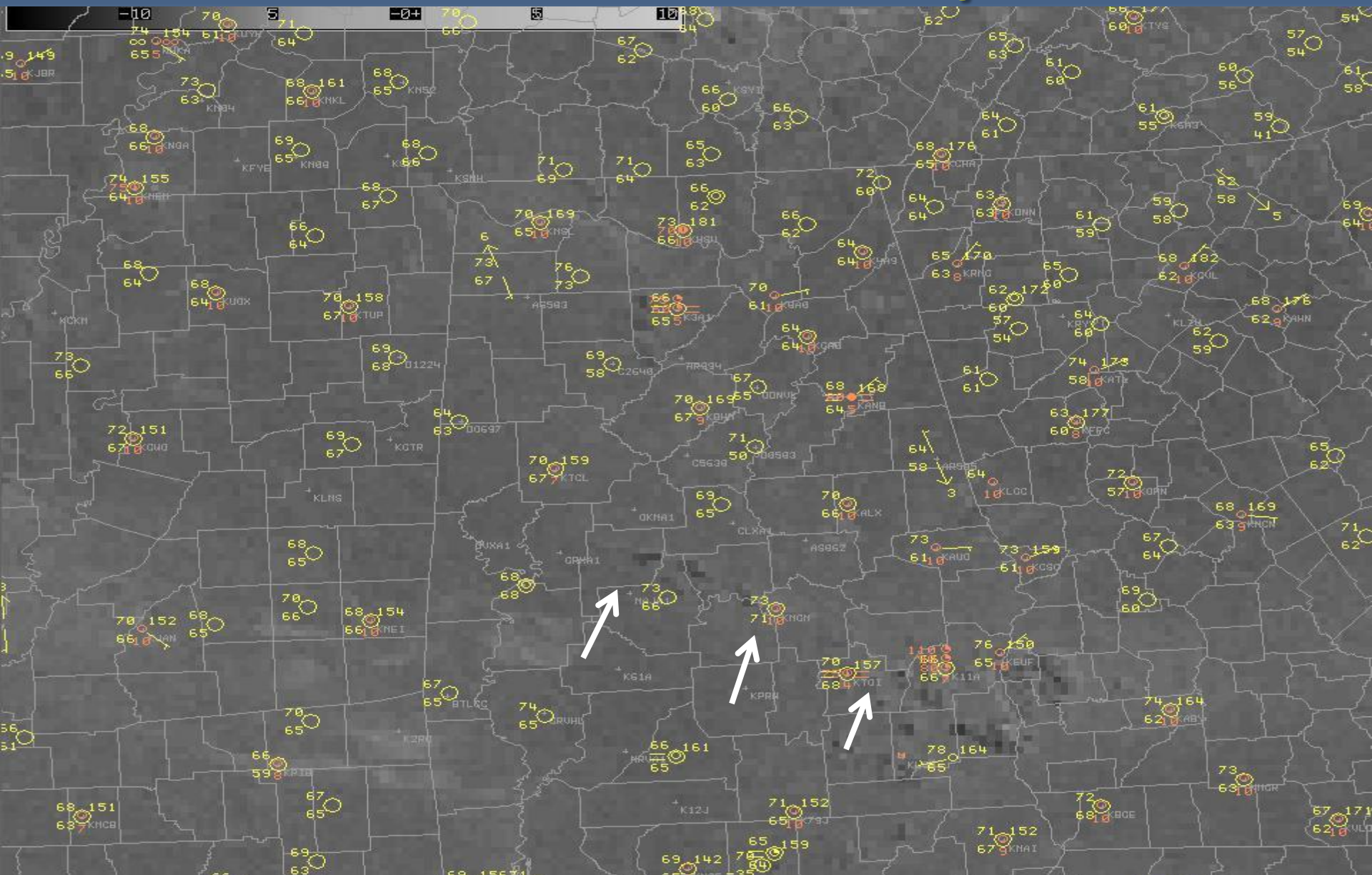
The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Gust Front



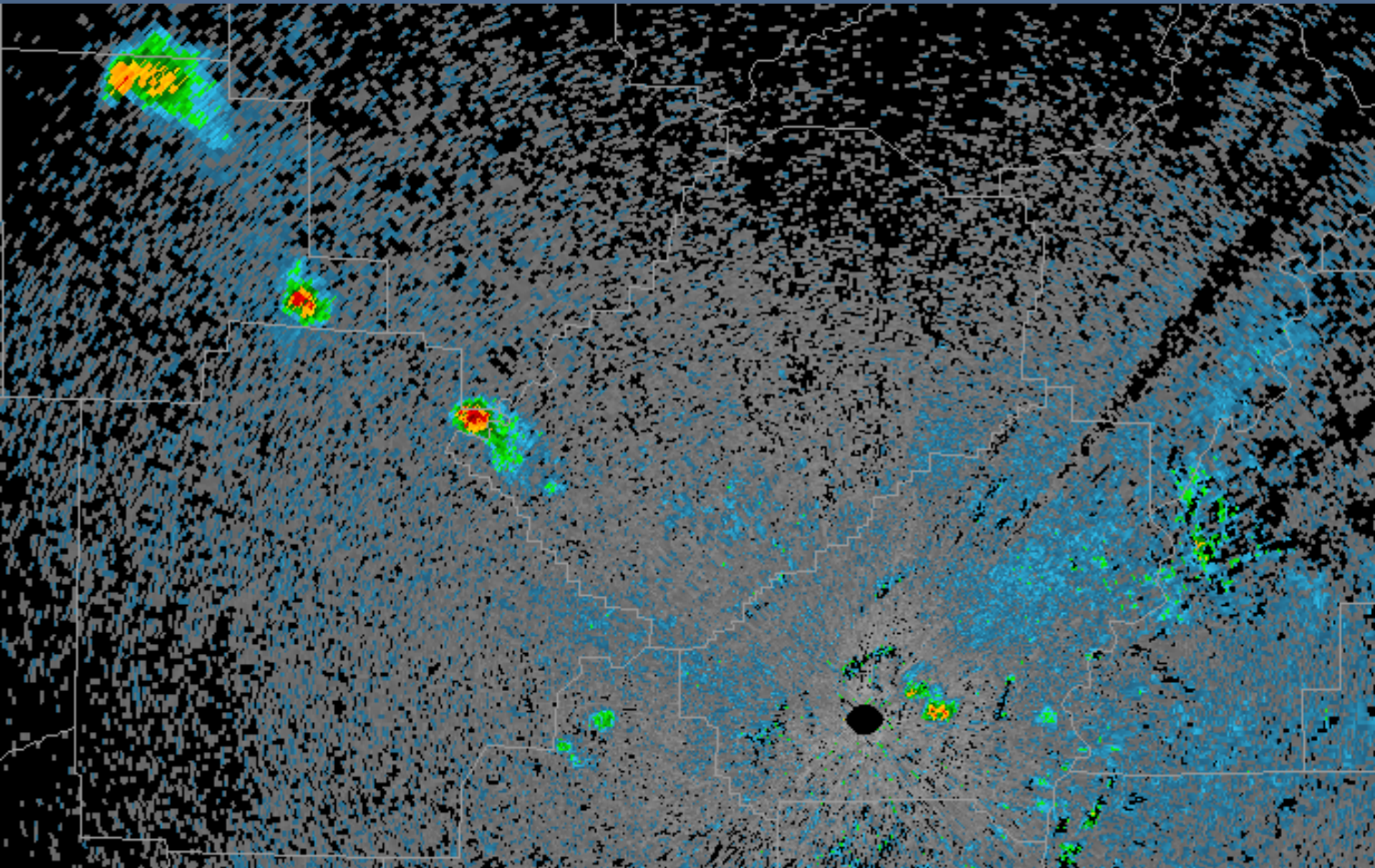
The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Mesoscale Boundary



The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Mesoscale Boundary



The 3-Dimensional Atmosphere Mesoscale Boundary



Instability, Wind Shear, and Lifting Mechanisms

Where Can I Get Help?

SPC Mesoscale Analysis

Auto-refresh is set to every minute [\[OFF 1 min 5 min\]](#)

[Change Sector](#)[Recent Image Archive & Loops](#)[SPC Homepage](#)[Mobile Version](#)

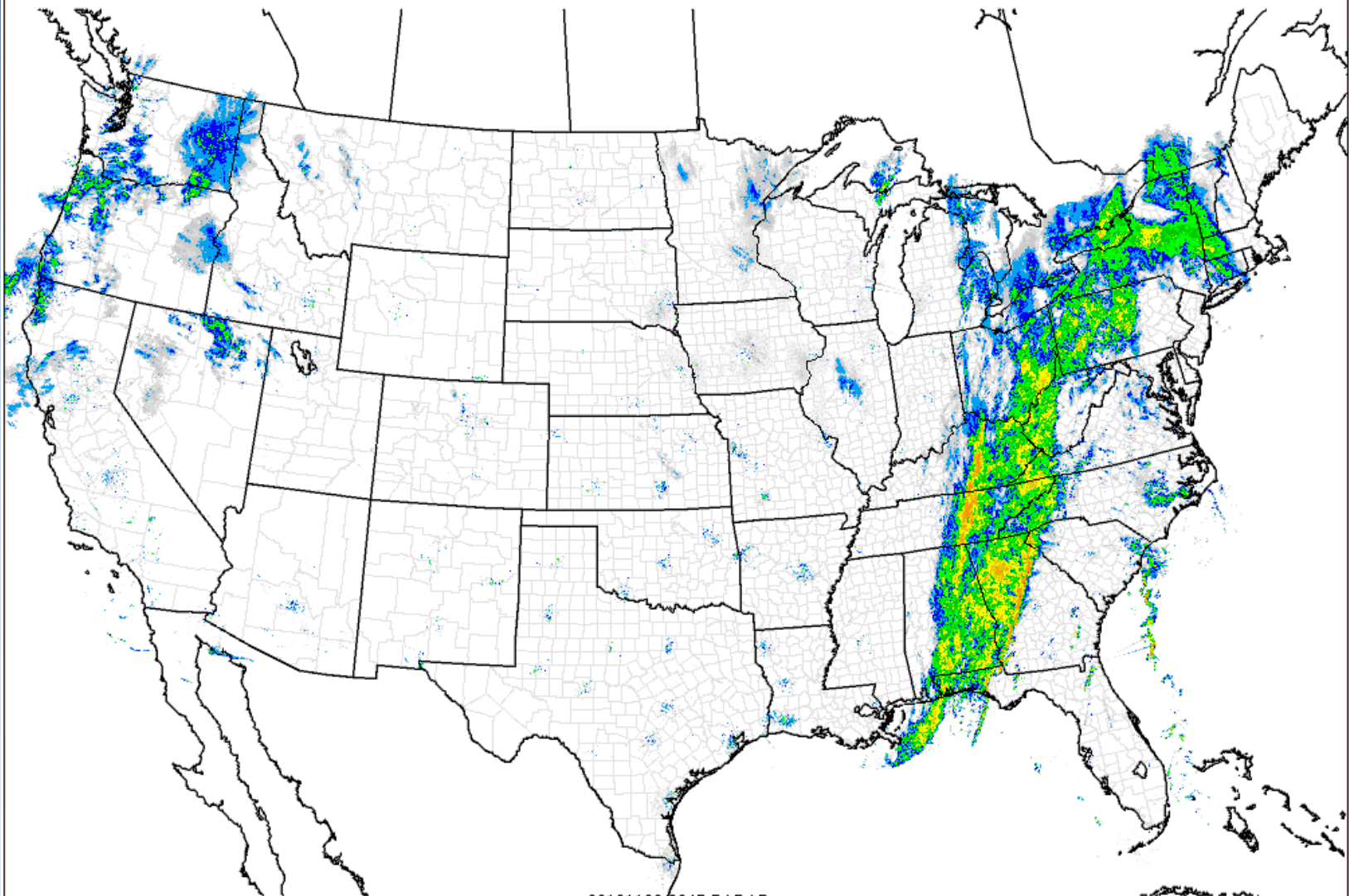
Surface: **11/30/10 22 UTC**

RUC: **10113021f001**

[Observations](#)[Basic Sfc](#)[Basic UA](#)[Kinematics](#)[Thermodynamics](#)[Wind Shear](#)[Composite Indices](#)[Multi-Parameter Fields](#)[Heavy Rain](#)[Winter Weather](#)[Fire Weather](#)

 NOAA/NWS/Storm Prediction Center

Mesoscale Analysis Data



20101130/2245 RADAR

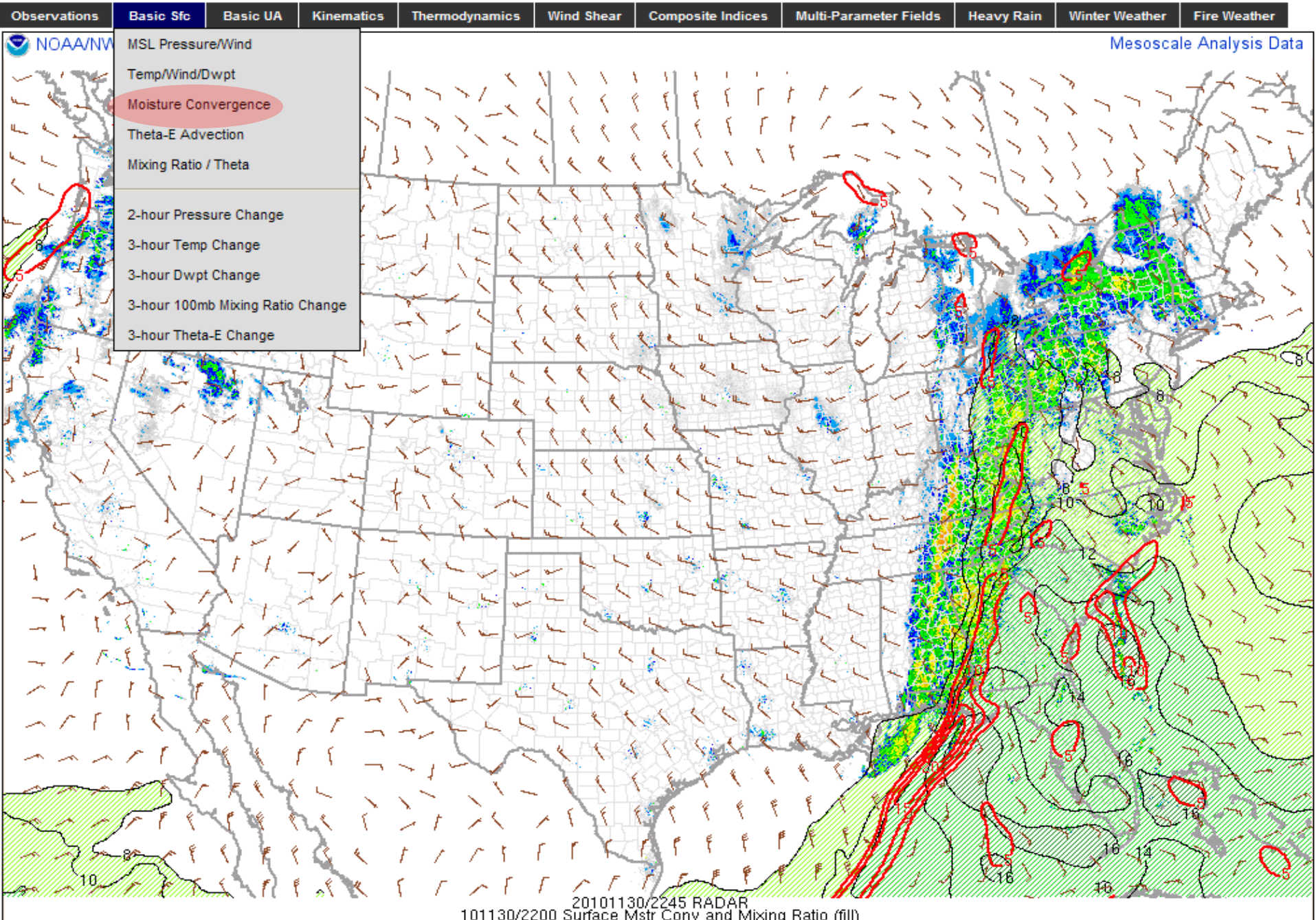
SPC Mesoscale Analysis

Auto-refresh is set to every minute [OFF 1 min 5 min]

[Change Sector](#)[Recent Image Archive & Loops](#)[SPC Homepage](#)[Mobile Version](#)

Surface: 11/30/10 22 UTC

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SPC Mesoscale Analysis

Auto-refresh is set to every minute [OFF 1 min 5 min]

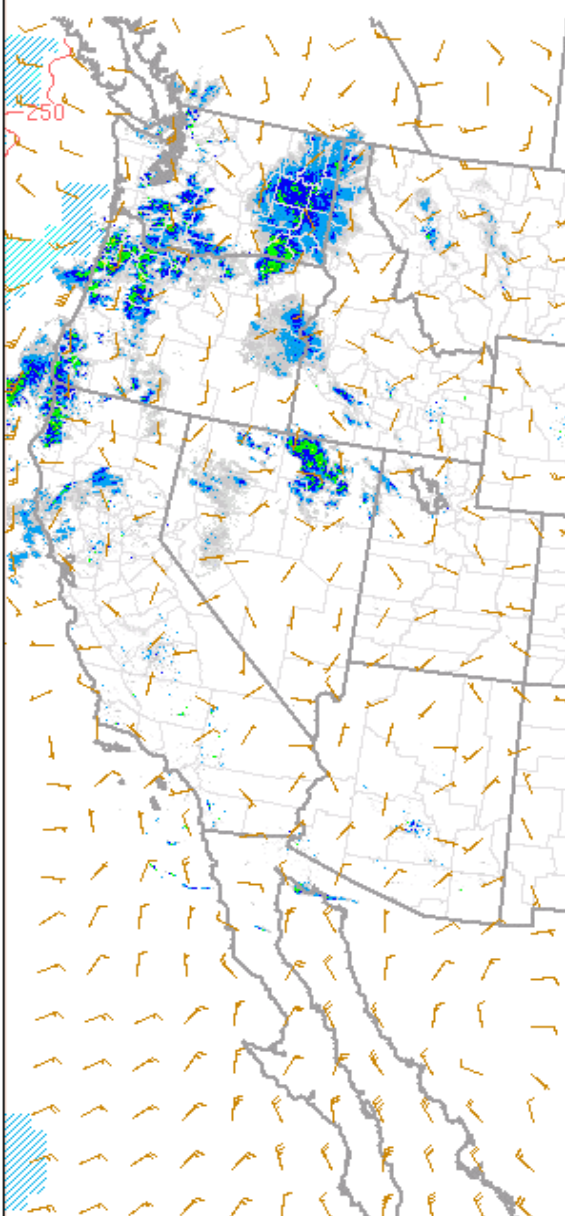
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Surface: 11/30/10 22 UTC

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[Observations](#)[Basic Sfc](#)[Basic UA](#)[Kinematics](#)[Thermodynamics](#)[Wind Shear](#)[Composite Indices](#)[Multi-Parameter Fields](#)[Heavy Rain](#)[Winter Weather](#)[Fire Weather](#)

 NOAA/NWS/Storm Prediction Center



CAPE/CIN - Surface-Based



CAPE/CIN - 100mb Mixed-Layer



CAPE - Most-Unstable / LPL Height



CAPE - Normalized



CAPE - Downdraft



Surface-based Lifted Index



Mid-Level Lapse Rates



Low-Level Lapse Rates



LCL Height



LFC Height



LCL-LFC Mean RH



3-hour Surface-Based CAPE Change

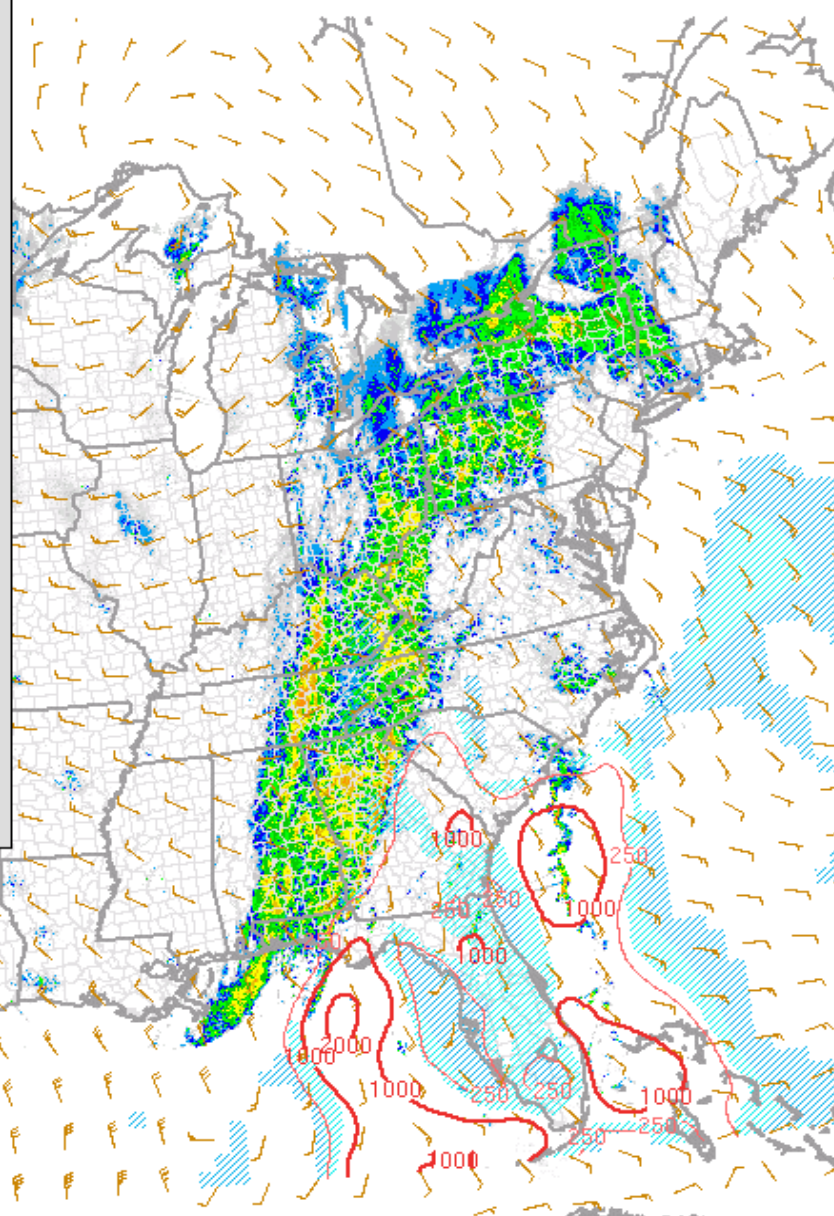
3-hour 100mb Mixed-Layer CAPE Change

3-hour Most-Unstable CAPE Change

3-hour Low-Level LR Change

6-hour Mid-Level LR Change

Mesoscale Analysis Data



20101130/2245 RADAR
101130/2200 SBCAPE (contour) and SBCIN (J/kg, shaded at 25 and 100)

SPC Mesoscale Analysis

Auto-refresh is set to every minute [OFF 1 min 5 min]

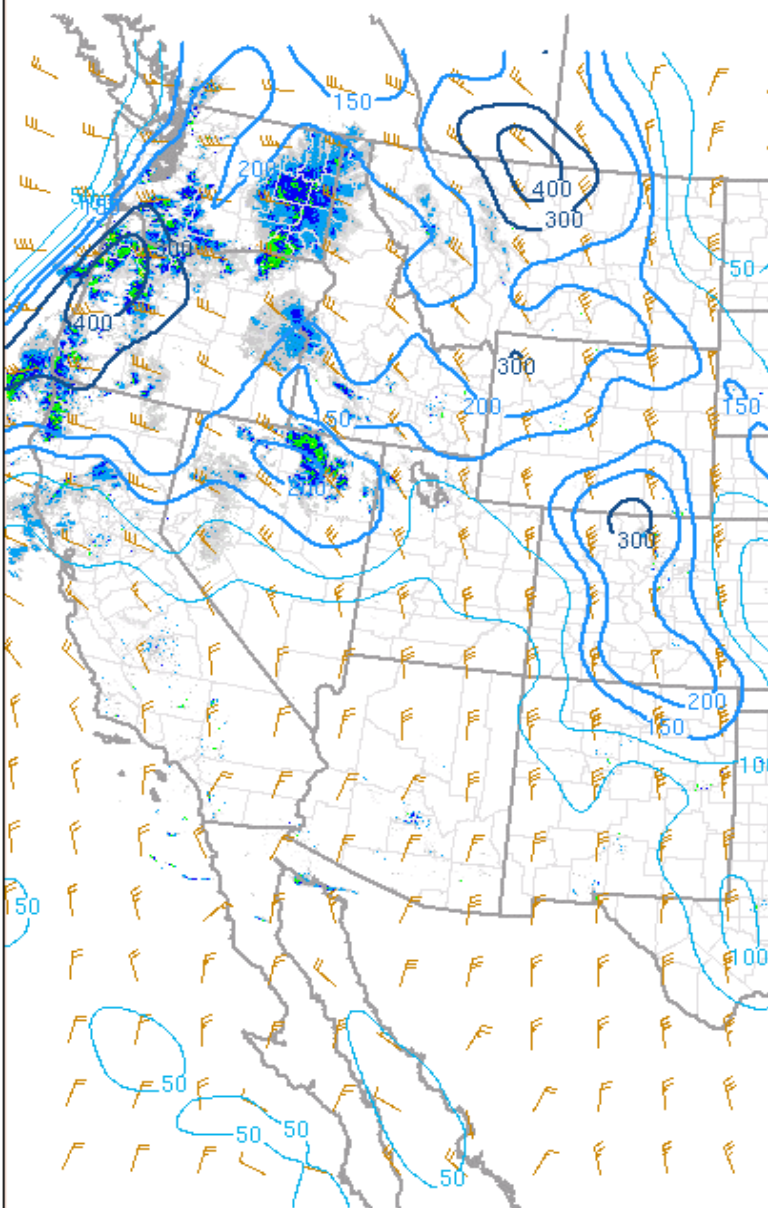
[Change Sector](#)[Recent Image Archive & Loops](#)[SPC Homepage](#)[Mobile Version](#)

Surface: 11/30/10 22 UTC

RUC: 10113021f001

Observations	Basic Sfc	Basic UA	Kinematics	Thermodynamics	Wind Shear	Composite Indices	Multi-Parameter Fields	Heavy Rain	Winter Weather	Fire Weather
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NOAA/NWS/Storm Prediction Center



Bulk Shear - Effective



Bulk Shear - Sfc-6km



Bulk Shear - Sfc-8km



Bulk Shear - Sfc-1km



BRN Shear



SR Helicity - Effective



SR Helicity - Sfc-3km



SR Helicity - Sfc-1km



SR Wind - Sfc-2km



SR Wind - 4-6km



SR Wind - 9-11km



SR Wind - Anvil Level



850-300mb Mean Wind



850 and 500mb Winds

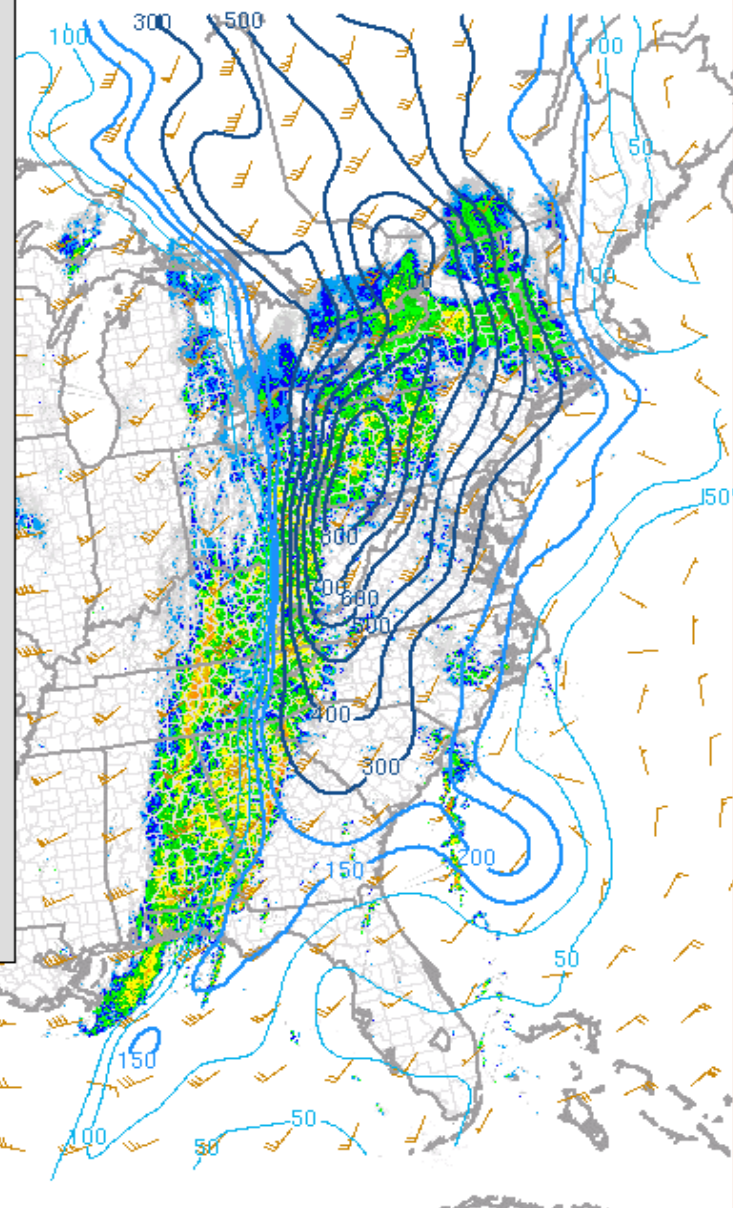


3hr Sfc-3km SR Helicity Change

3hr Sfc-1km Bulk Shear Change

3hr Sfc-6km Bulk Shear Change

Mesoscale Analysis Data



20101130/2245 RADAR
101130/2200 0-1 km SRH (m2/s2) and storm motion (kt)

Region	Type of plot	Year	Month	From	To
North America	Text: List	2009	Nov	29/12/2	29/12/2

Click on the image to request a sounding at that location or enter the station number below.



Station Number: 72249

☐ Recalculate Data

72249 Ft Worth, TX (FWD)

72230 BMX Shelby County Airport

100

200

300

400

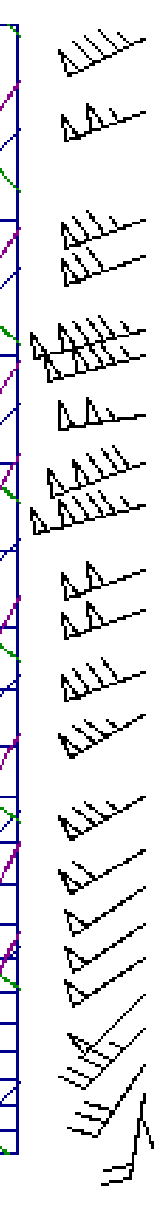
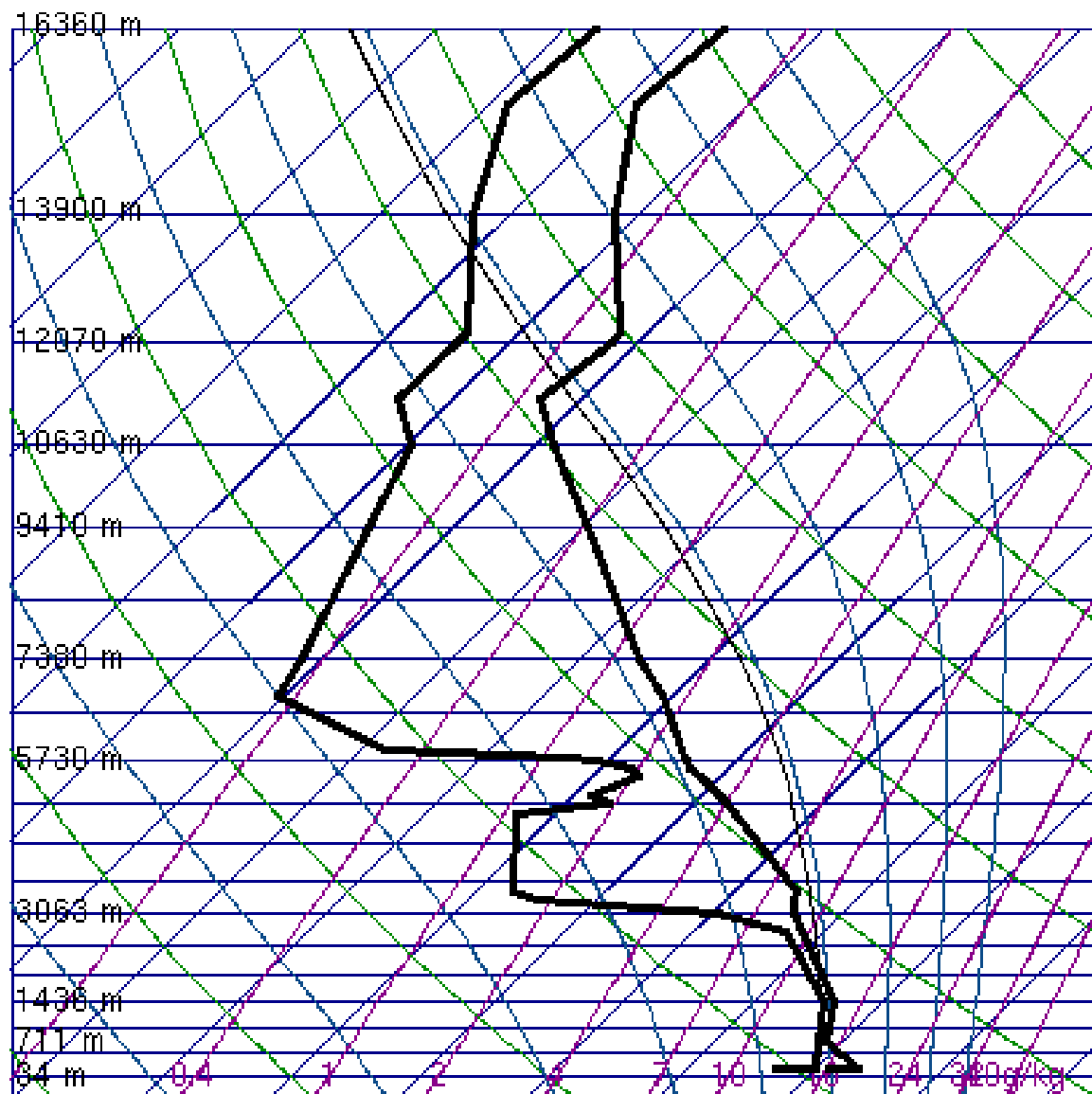
500

600

700

800

900



SLAT	33.16
SLON	-86.76
SELV	178.0
SHOW	-8.20
LIFT	-7.38
LFTV	-7.91
SWET	613.9
KINX	39.90
CTOT	29.50
VTOT	30.30
TOTL	59.80
CAPE	1829.
CAPV	1980.
CINS	-27.3
CINV	-26.2
EQLV	218.1
EQTV	218.0
LFCT	787.4
LFCV	793.7
BRCH	9.95
BRCV	10.77
LCLT	291.6
LCLP	927.2
MLTH	298.0
MLMR	14.72
THCK	5696.
PWAT	39.11

00Z 09 Apr 1998

University of Wyoming

Instability, Wind Shear, and Lifting Mechanisms

Where Can I Get Help?

<http://www.spc.noaa.gov/exper/mesoanalysis>

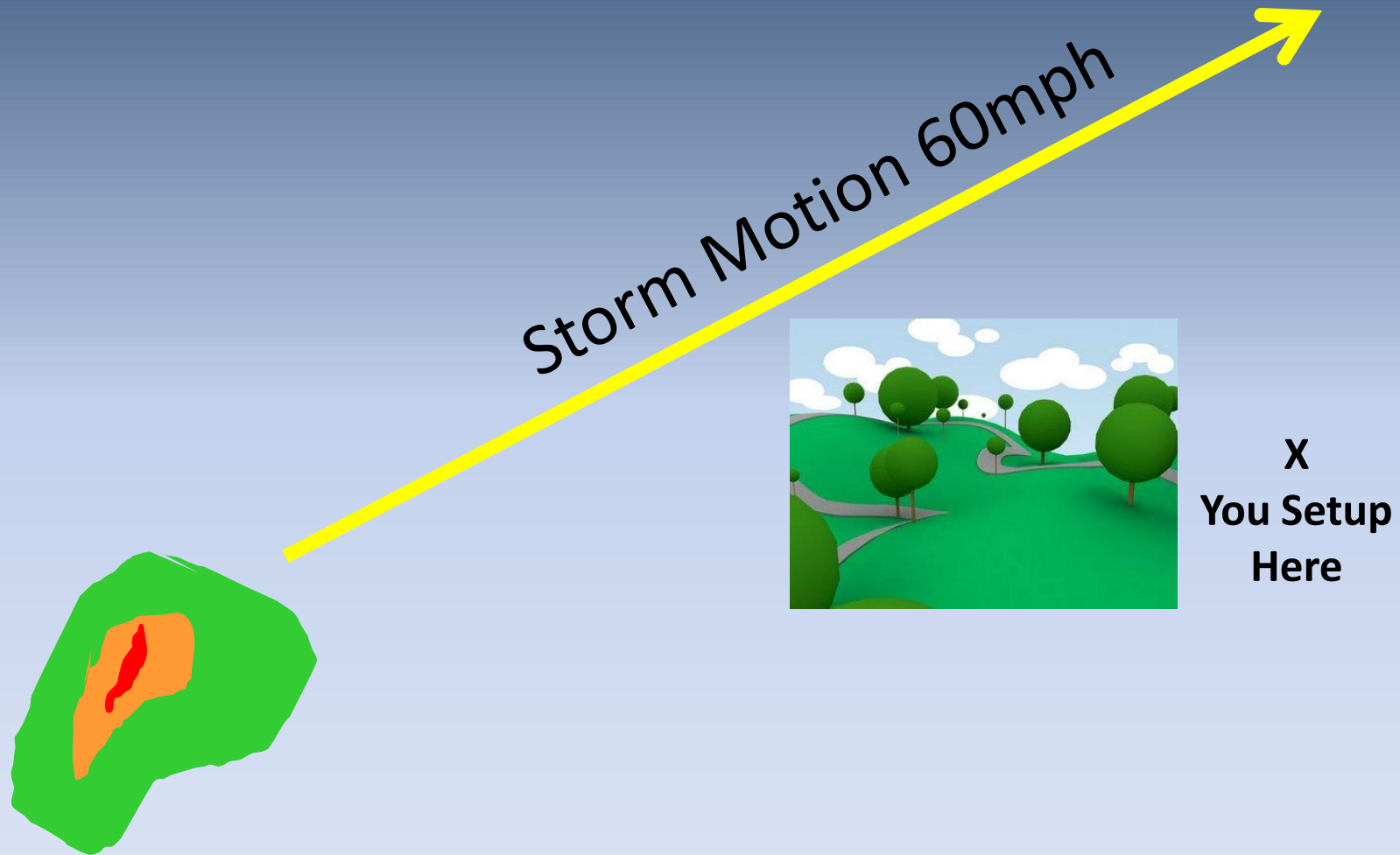
<http://weather.uwyo.edu/upperair/sounding.html>

What We Observe When Spotting Midwest versus The Southeast

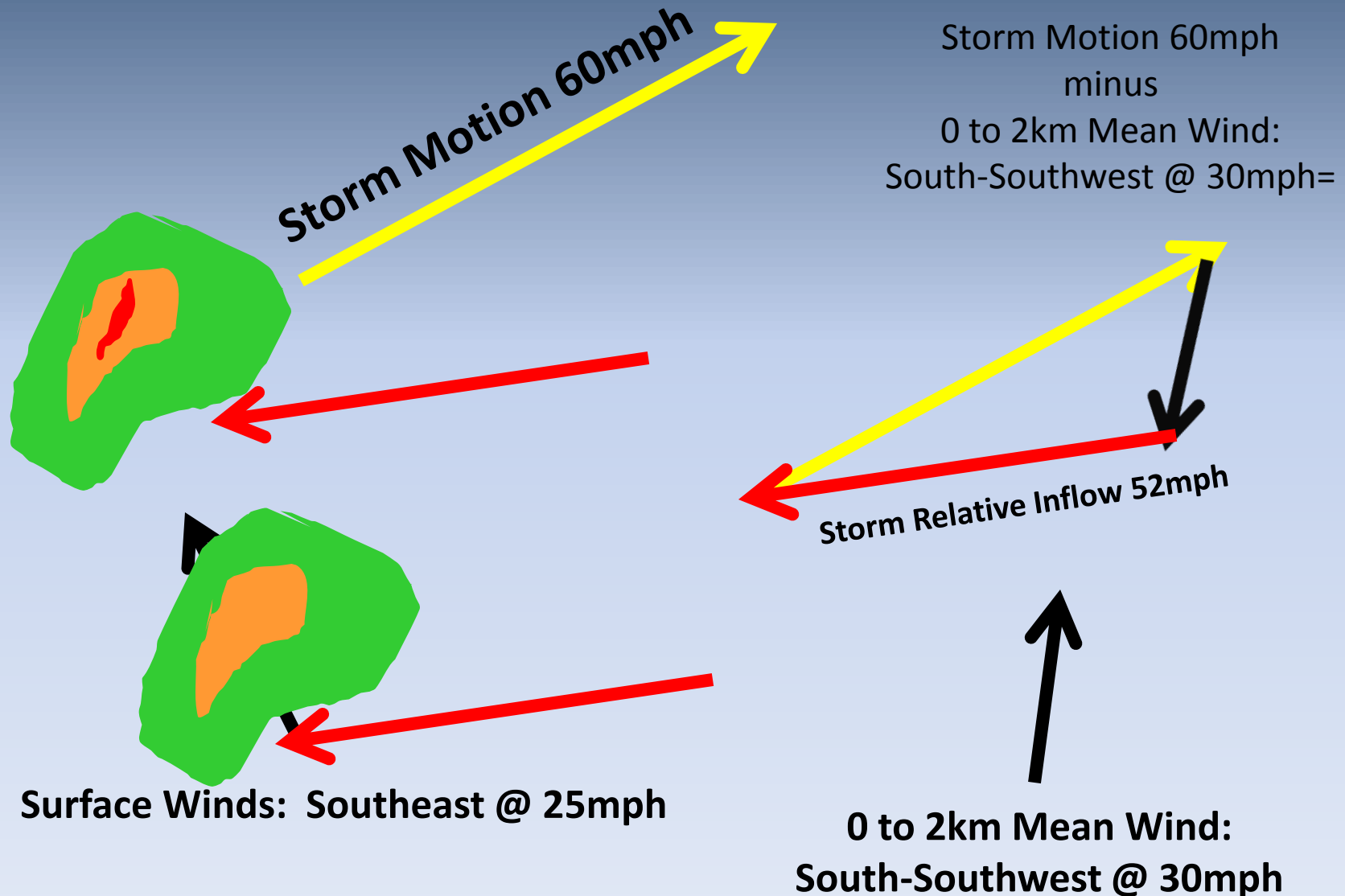




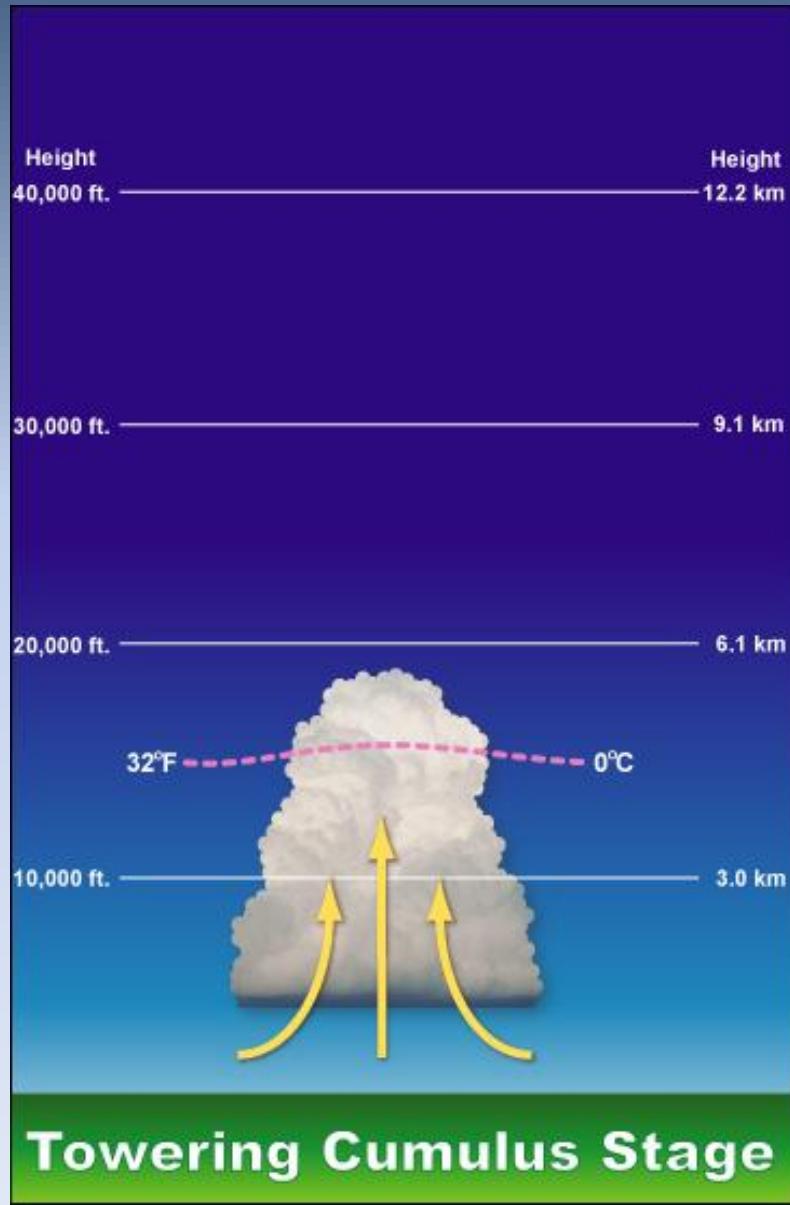
What We Observe When Spotting Storm Motion



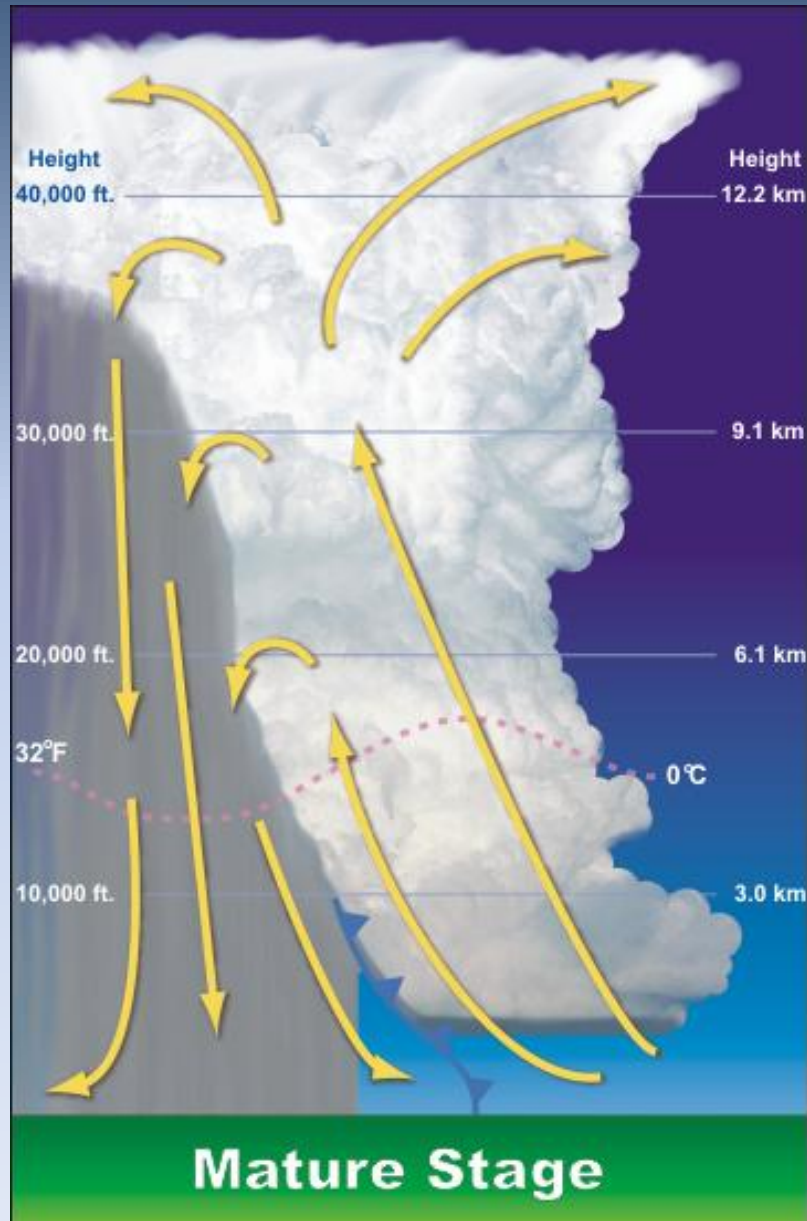
What We Observe When Spotting Storm Relative Inflow



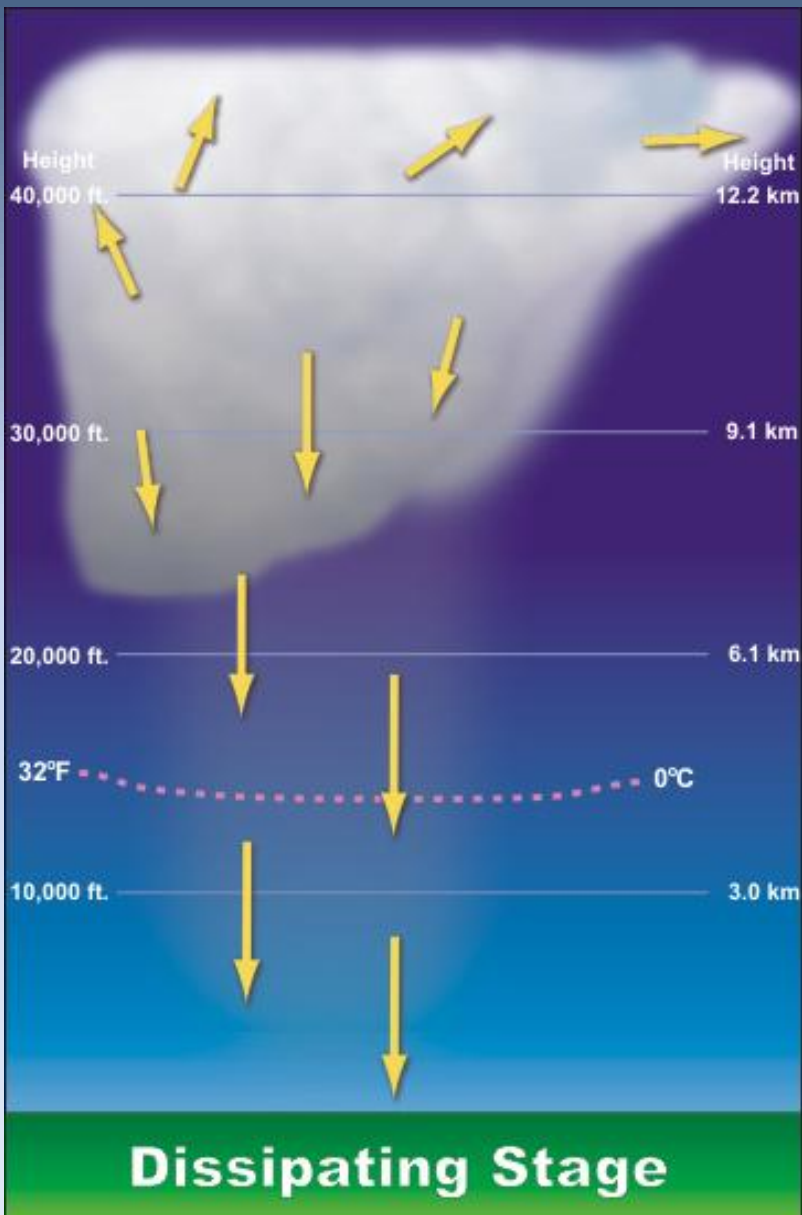
What We Observe When Spotting Towering Cumulus



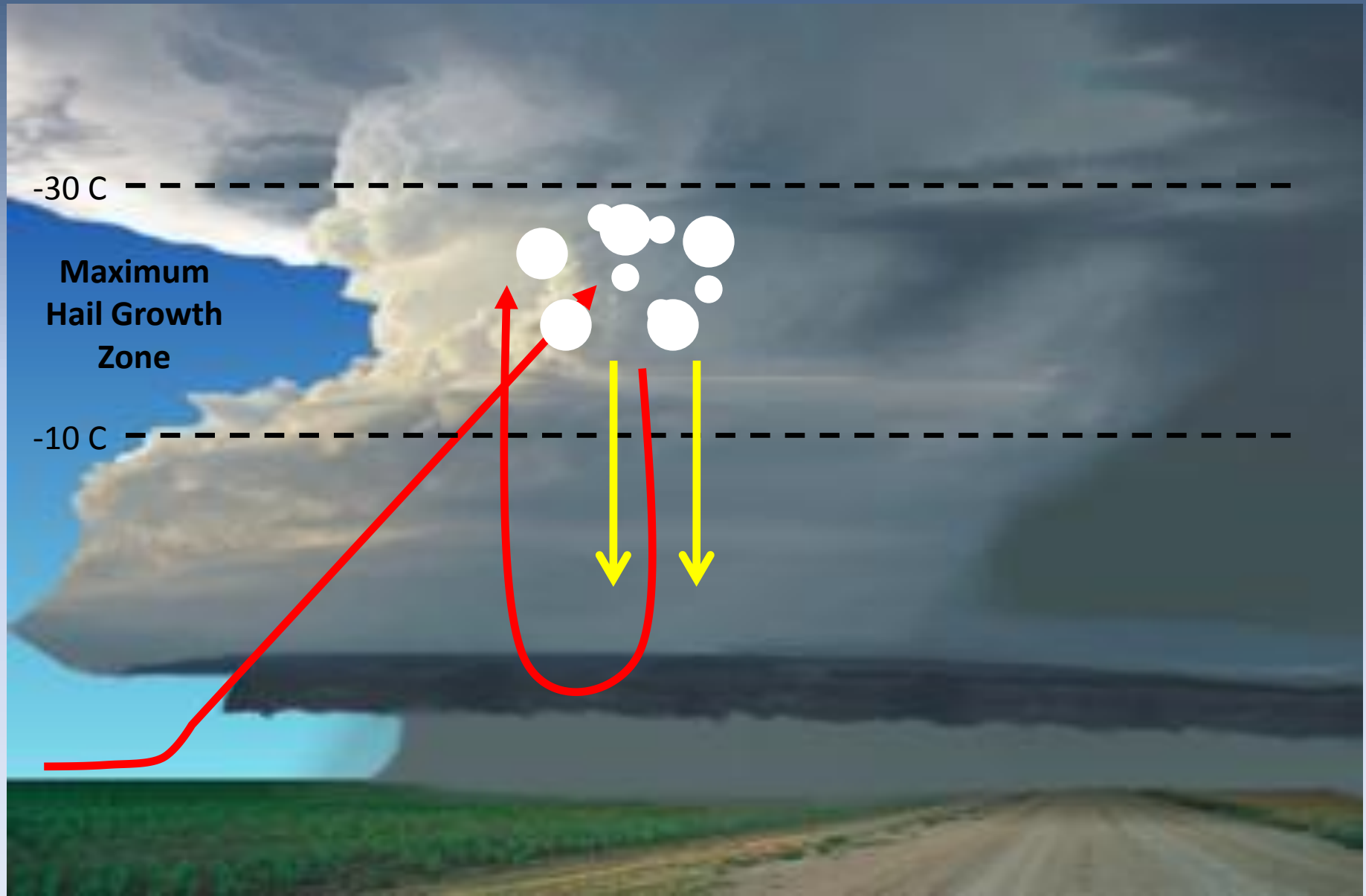
What We Observe When Spotting Mature Stage



What We Observe When Spotting Dissipation Stage



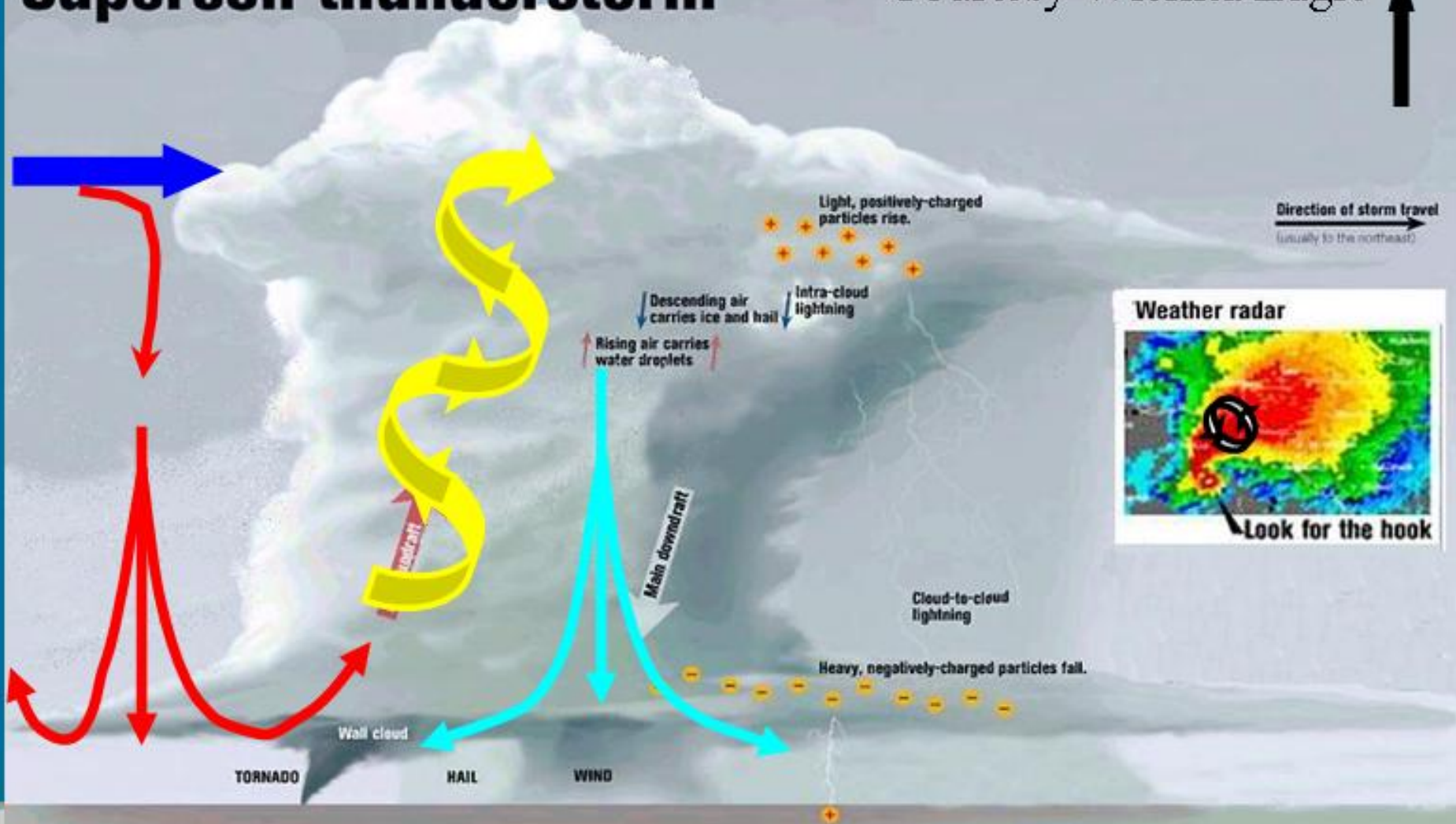
What We Observe When Spotting Large Hail



What We Observe When Spotting Right Place - Right Time

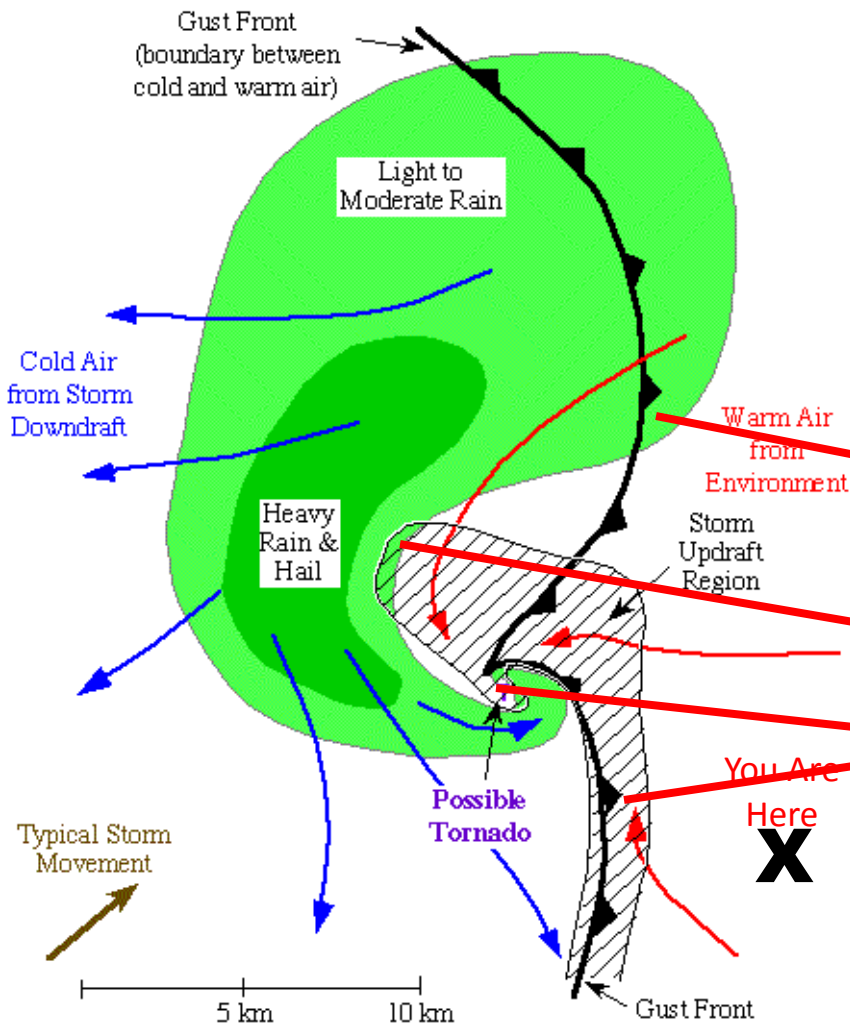
Supercell thunderstorm

Courtesy Wichita Eagle



What We Observe When Spotting SuperCell

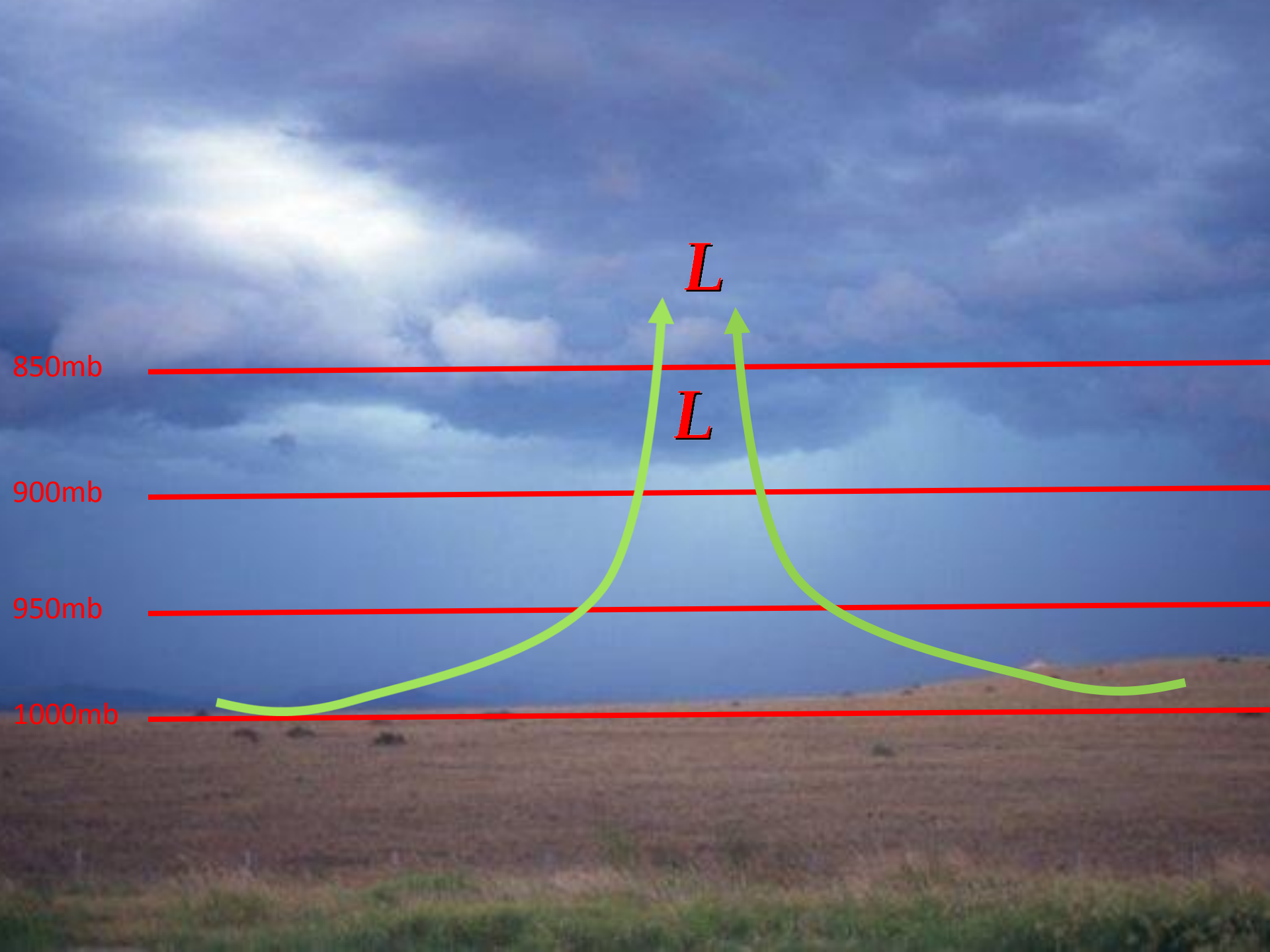
Schematic of Surface Conditions Common with a Supercell Thunderstorm

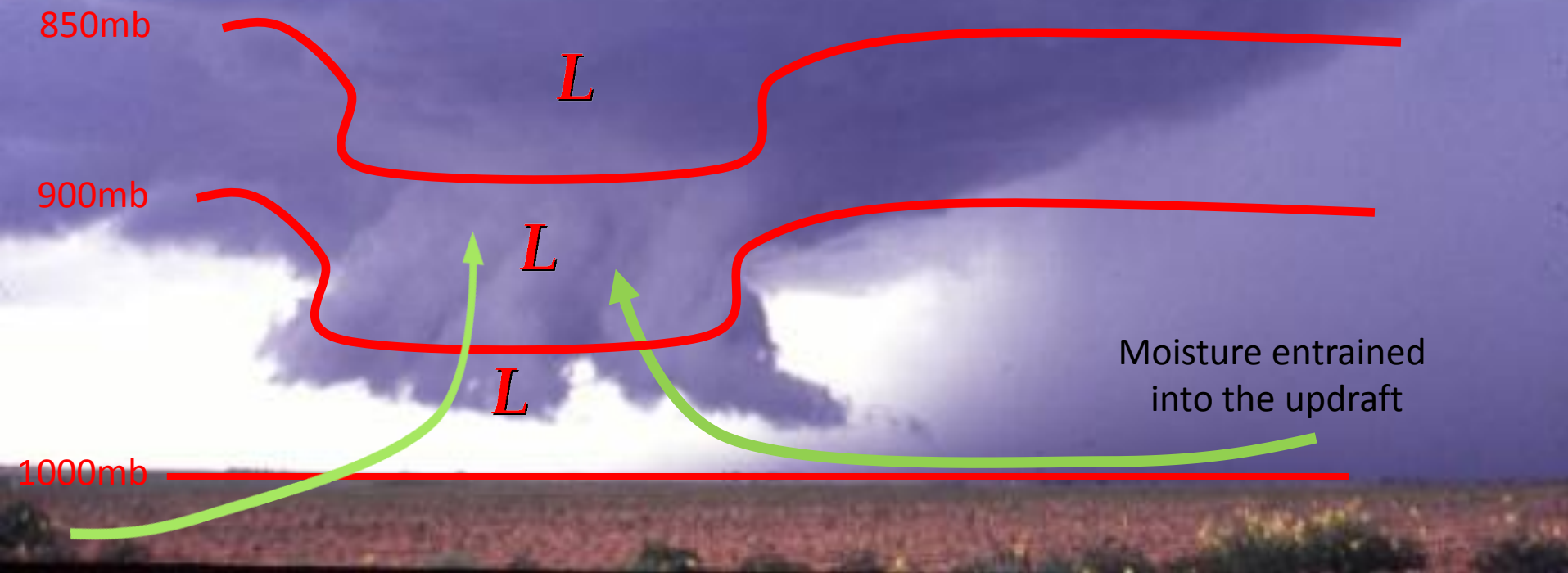


What We Observe When Spotting Wall Cloud



- A wall cloud is nothing more than the base of an updraft.
- Downward sloping towards the precipitation.
- Rotating!






What We Observe When Spotting Shelf Cloud



- A shelf cloud is the leading edge of a gust front that is moving out and away from the precipitation.
- Downward sloping away from the precipitation.
- Not rotating!



When the cool air from the
downdraft reaches the surface....

... it creates the outflow which pushes forward and
provides lift for clouds to form (along the black line.

What We Observe When Spotting Quiz Time



© Tom A. Warner



























Example of a









© 2003 Andrew Revering





JUN 9 2006





Courtesy of Jay Fowler





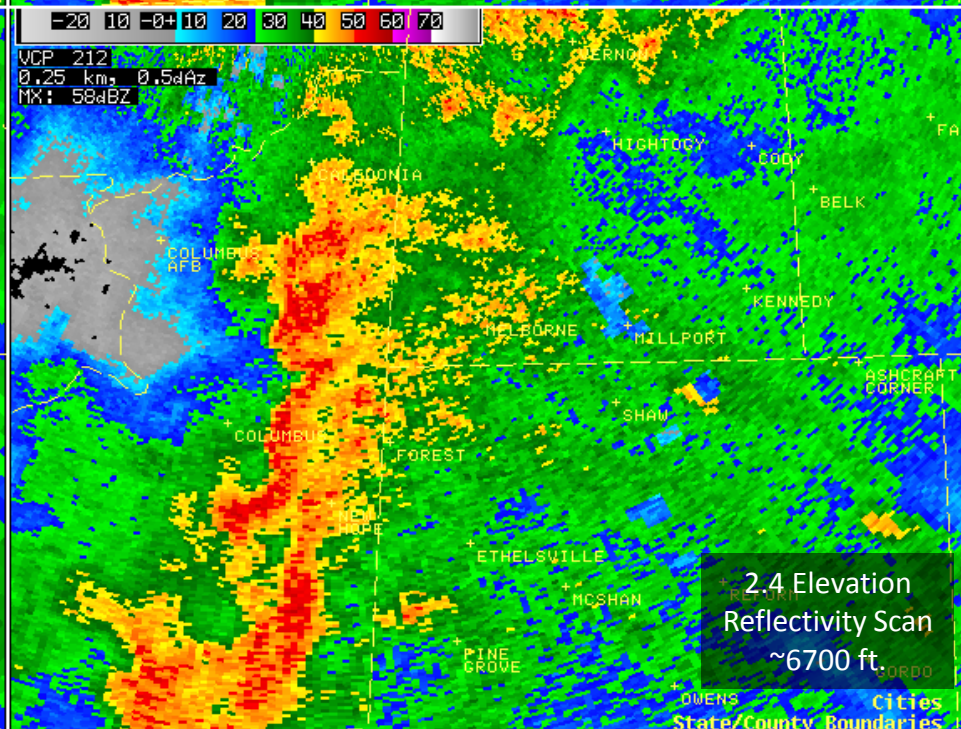
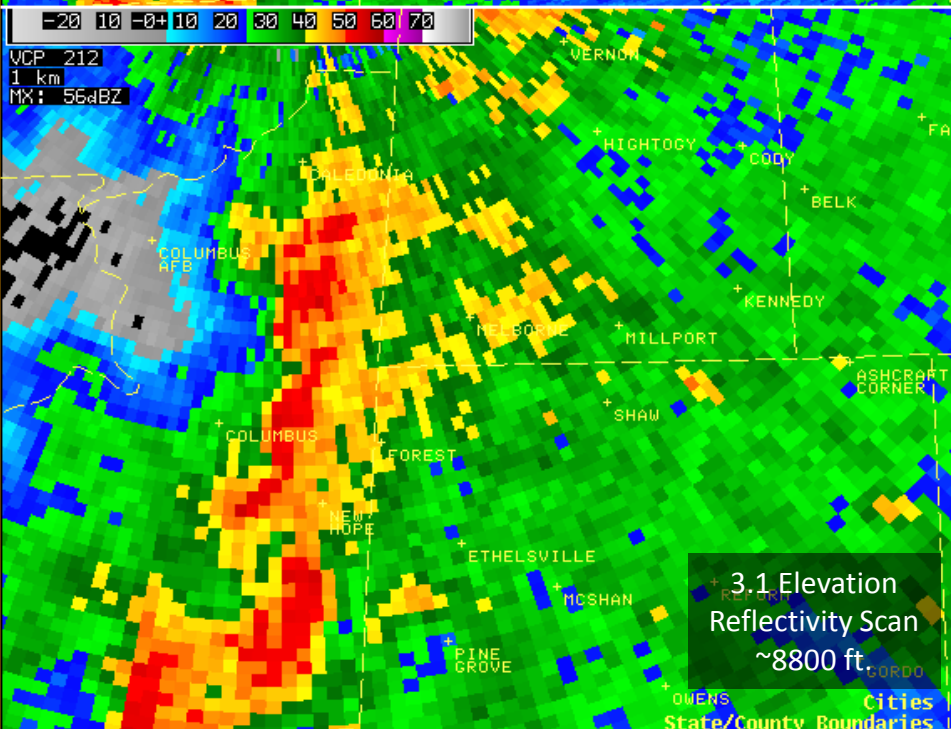
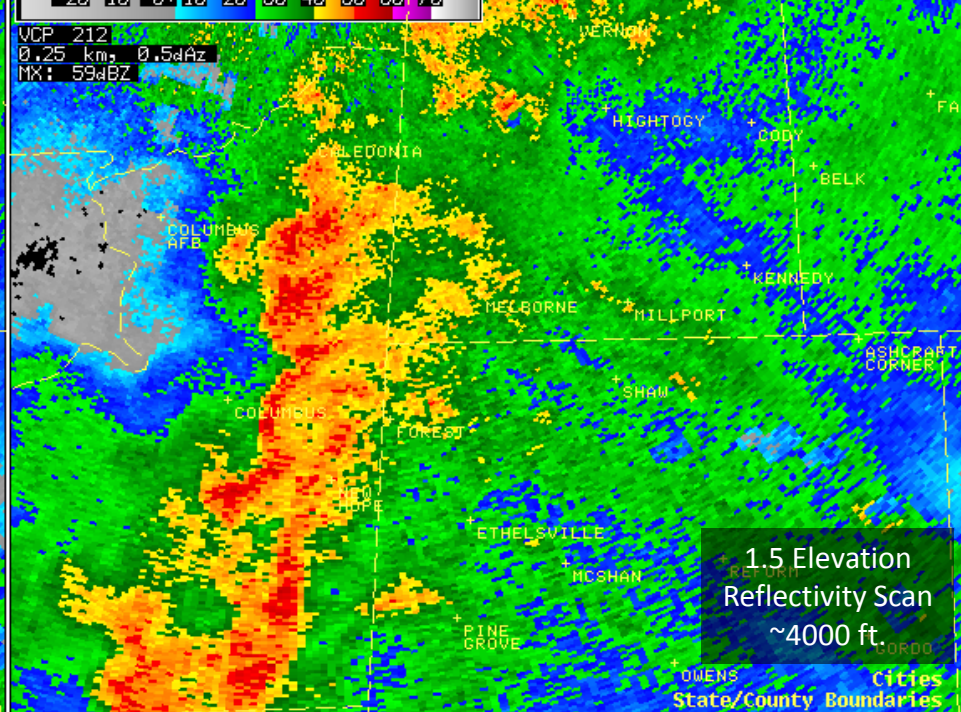
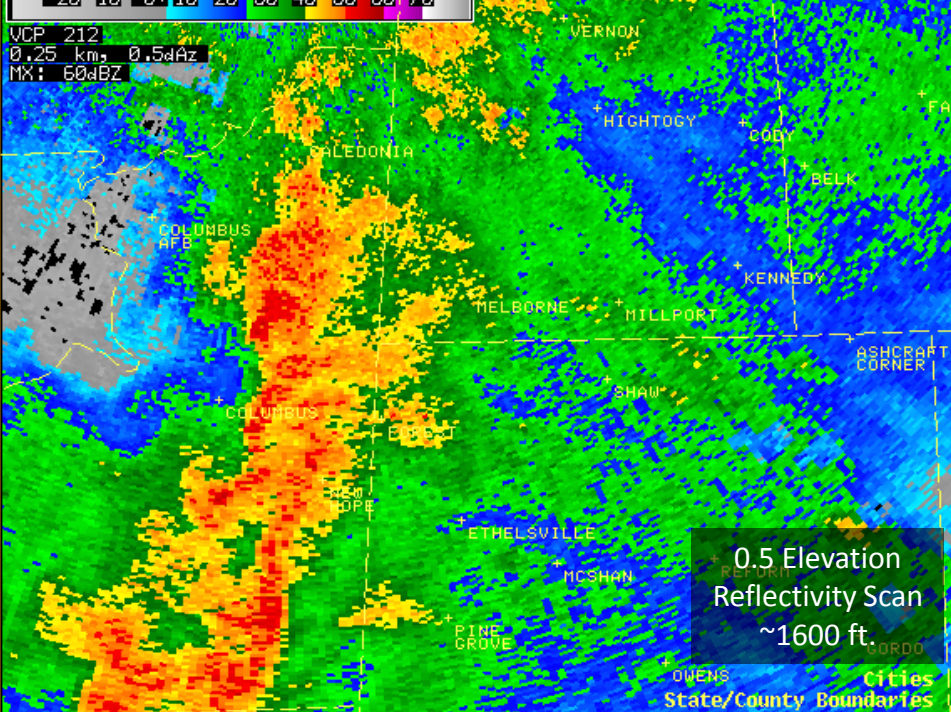


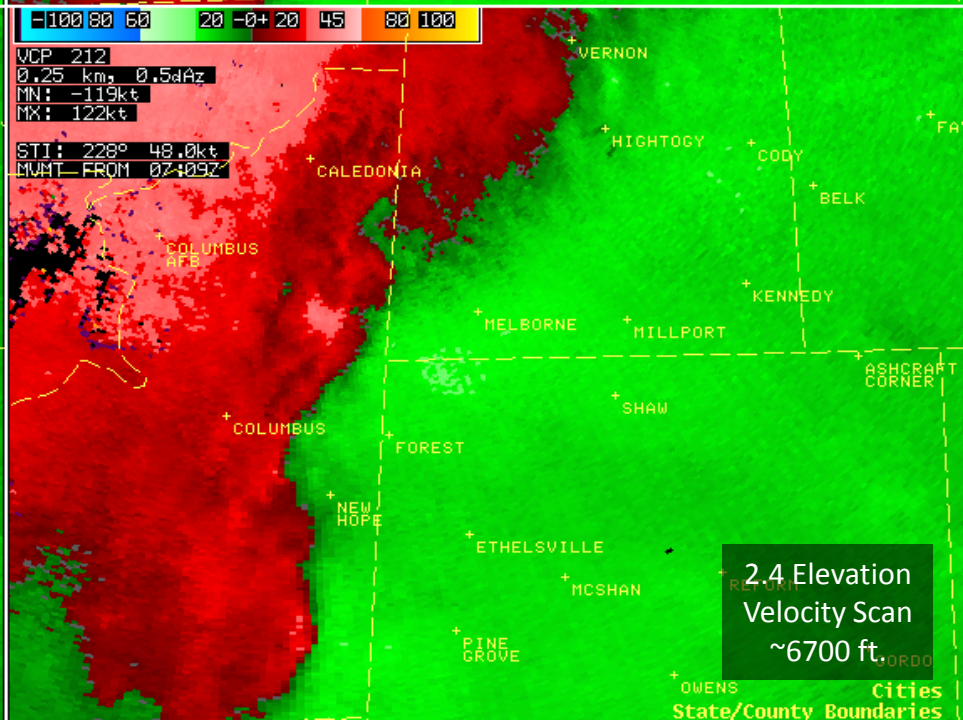
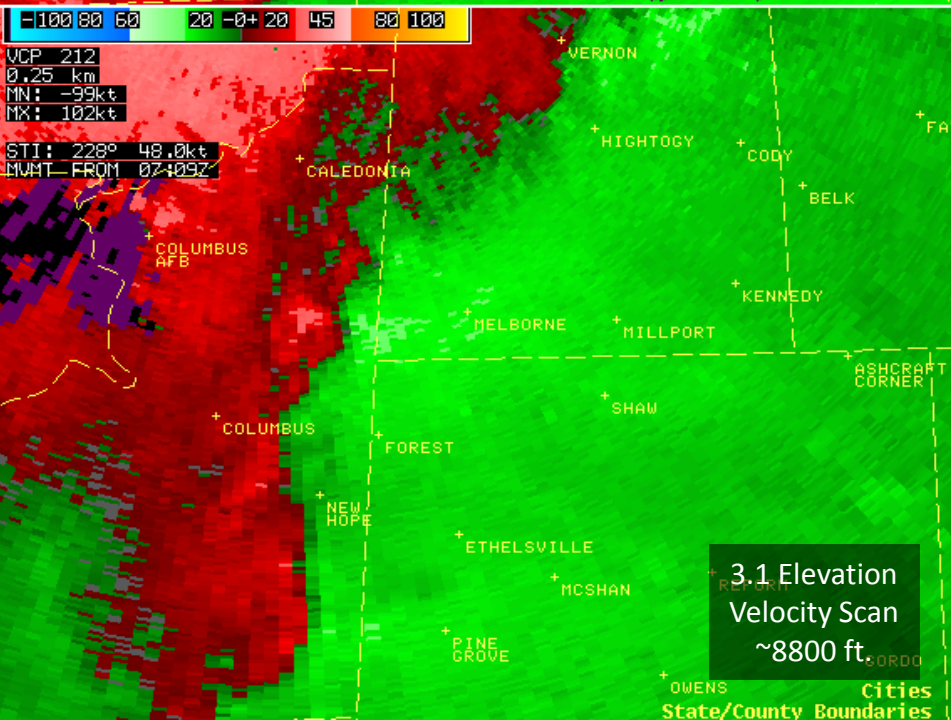
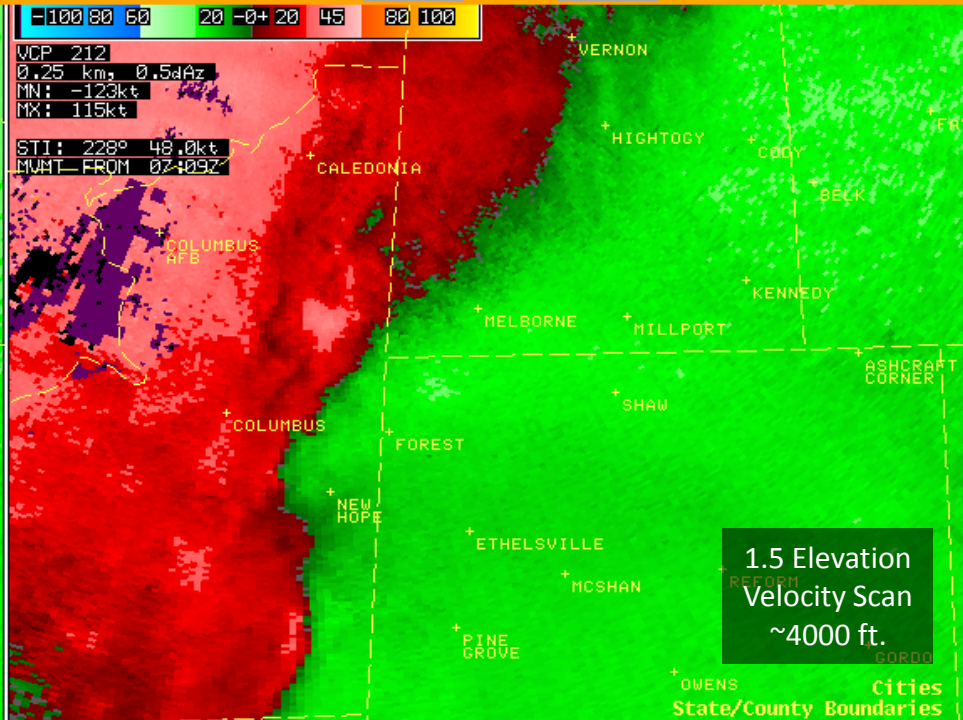
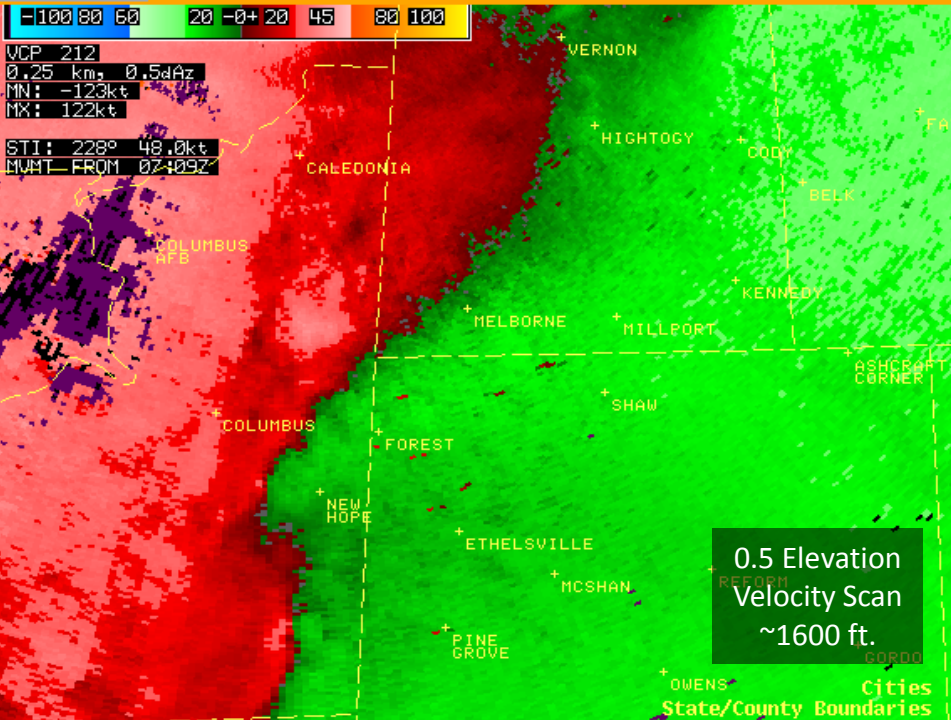
© 1999 Eric Nguyen

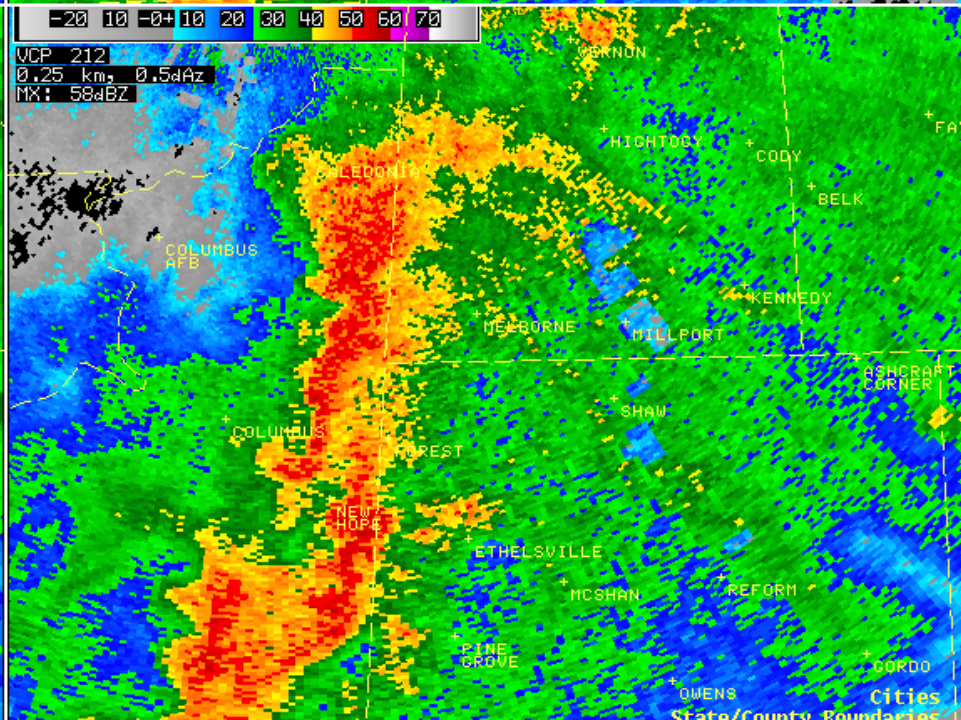
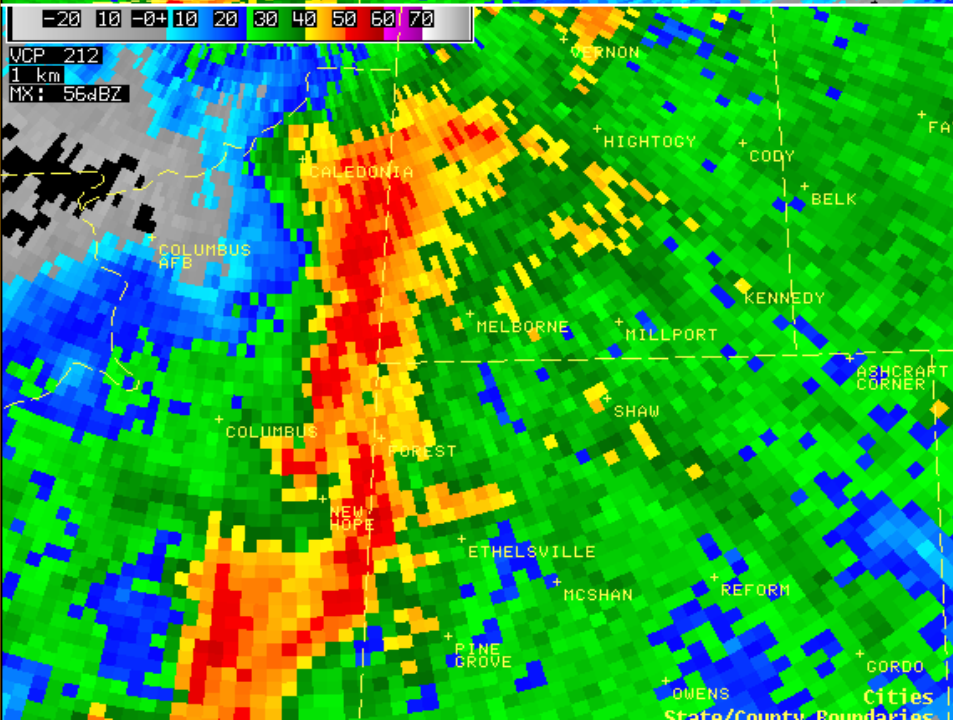
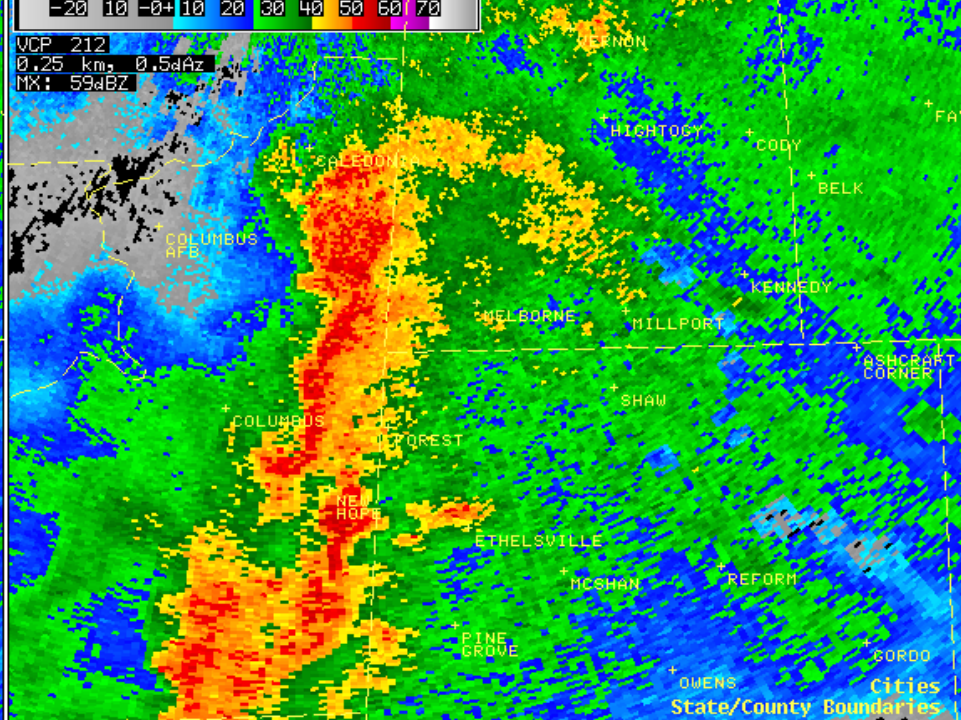
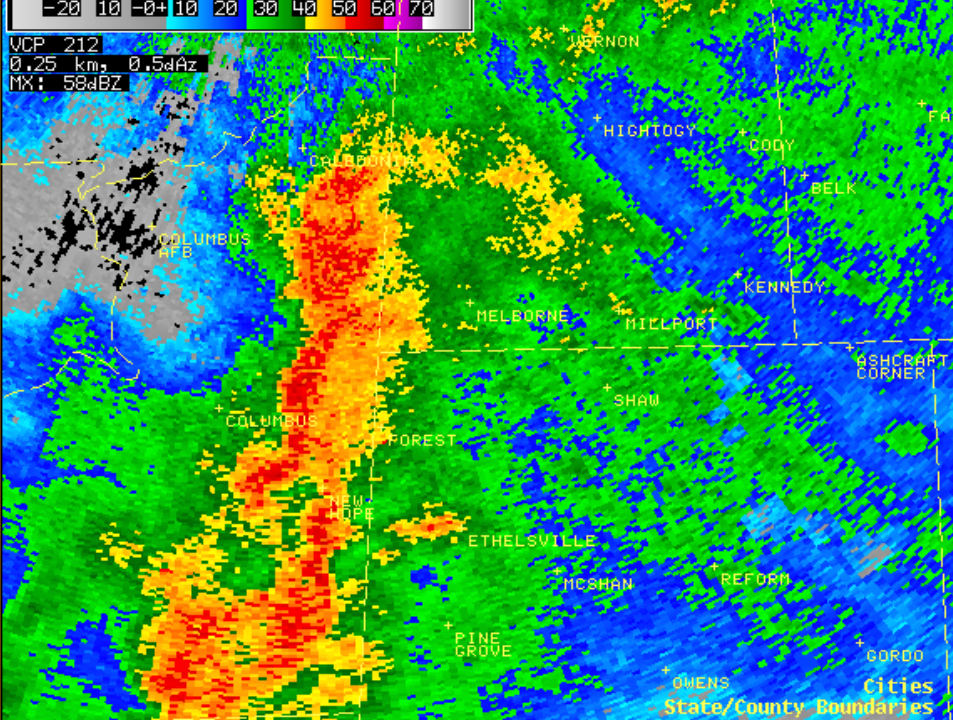


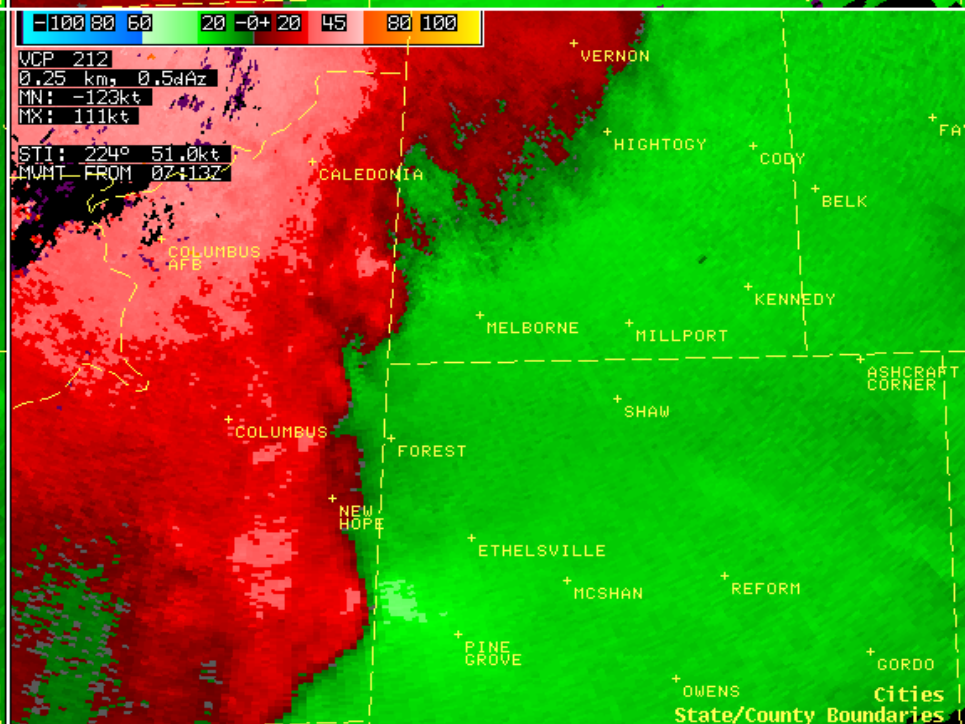
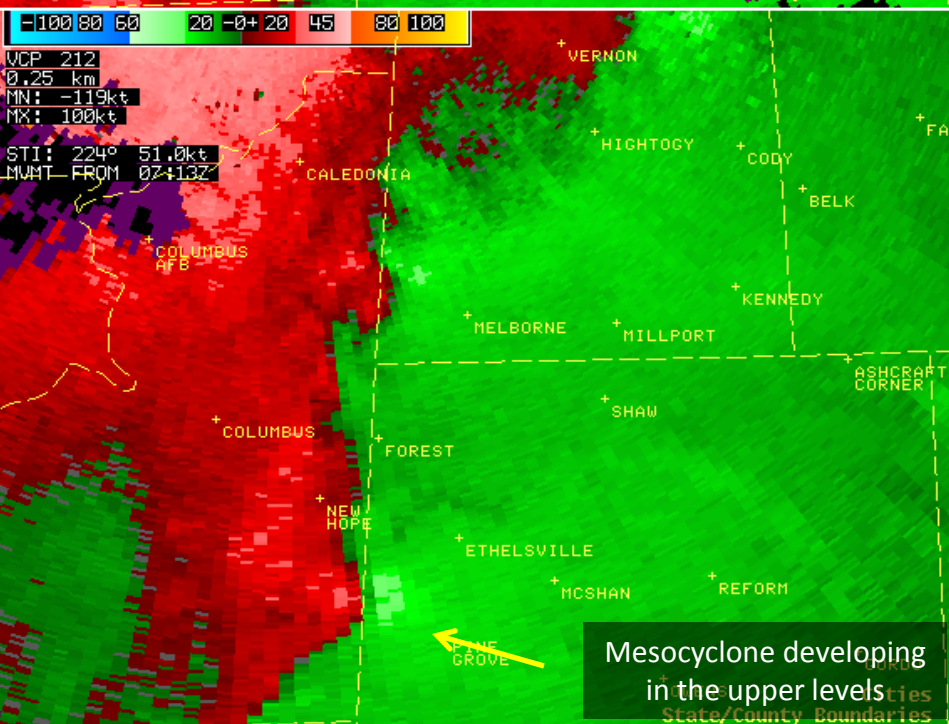
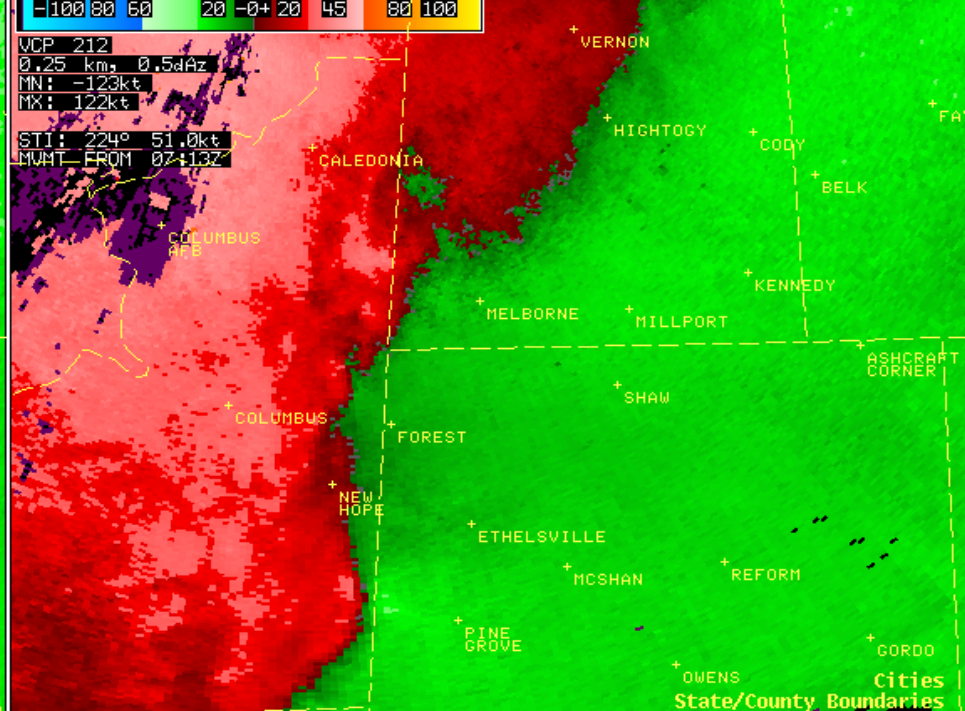
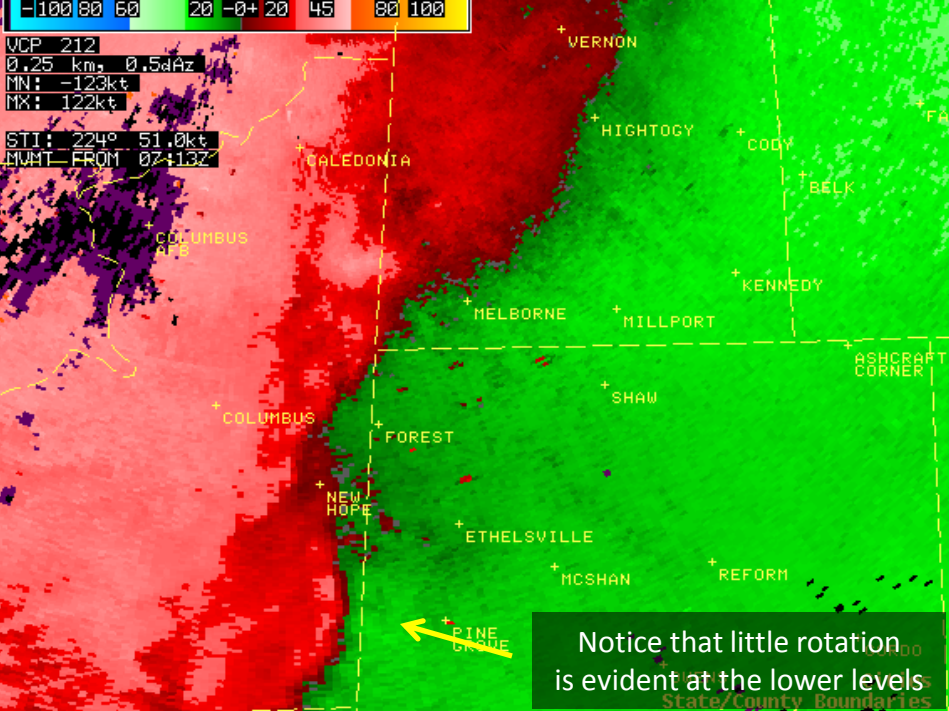
Warning Scenario

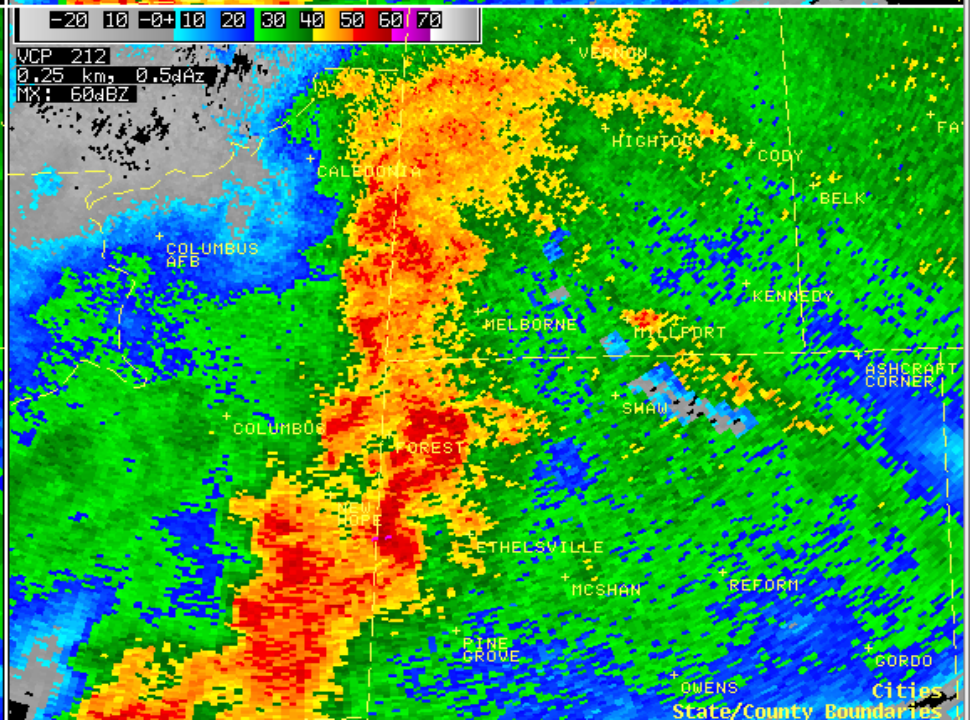
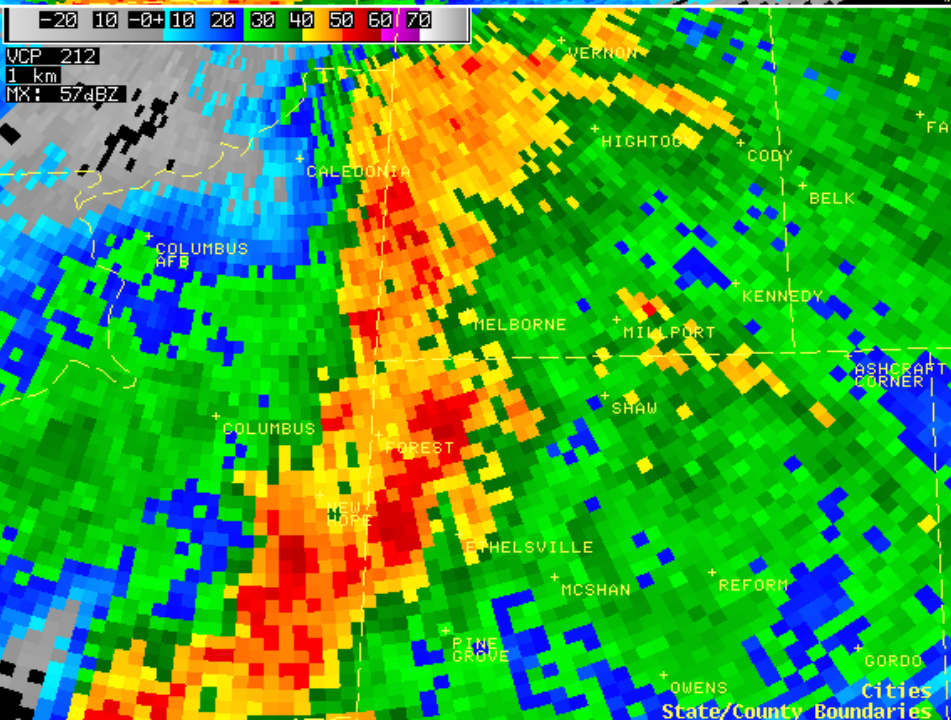
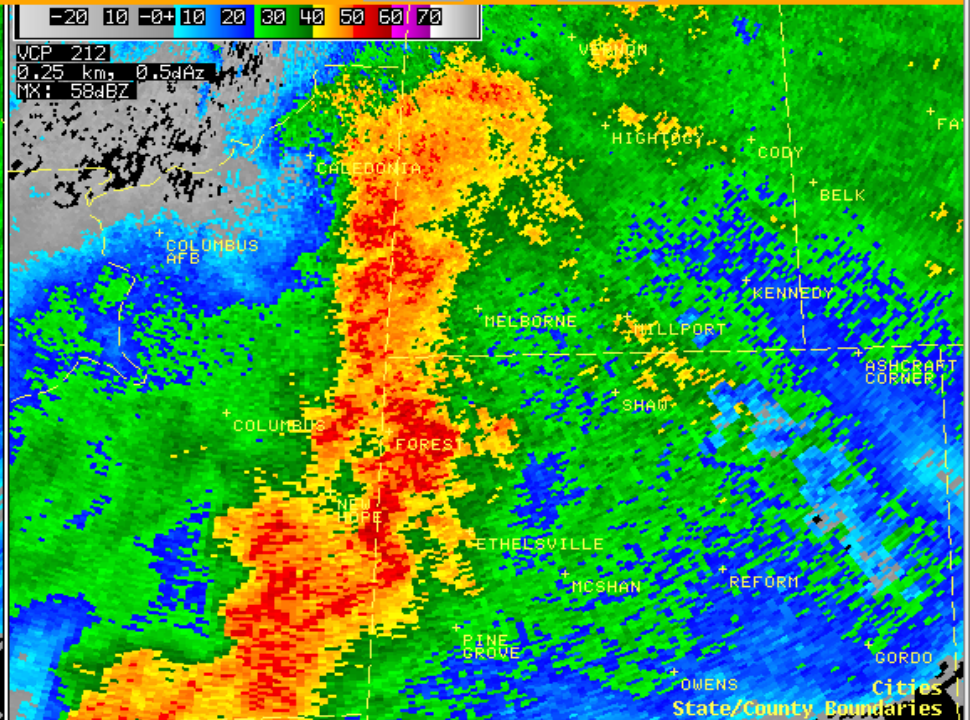
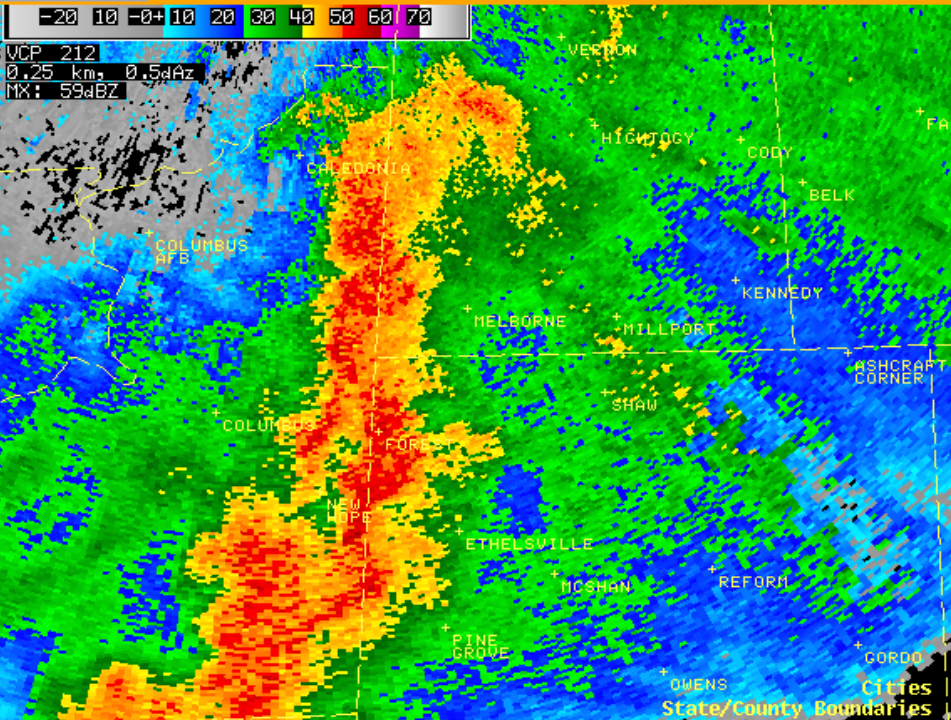
November 30, 2010

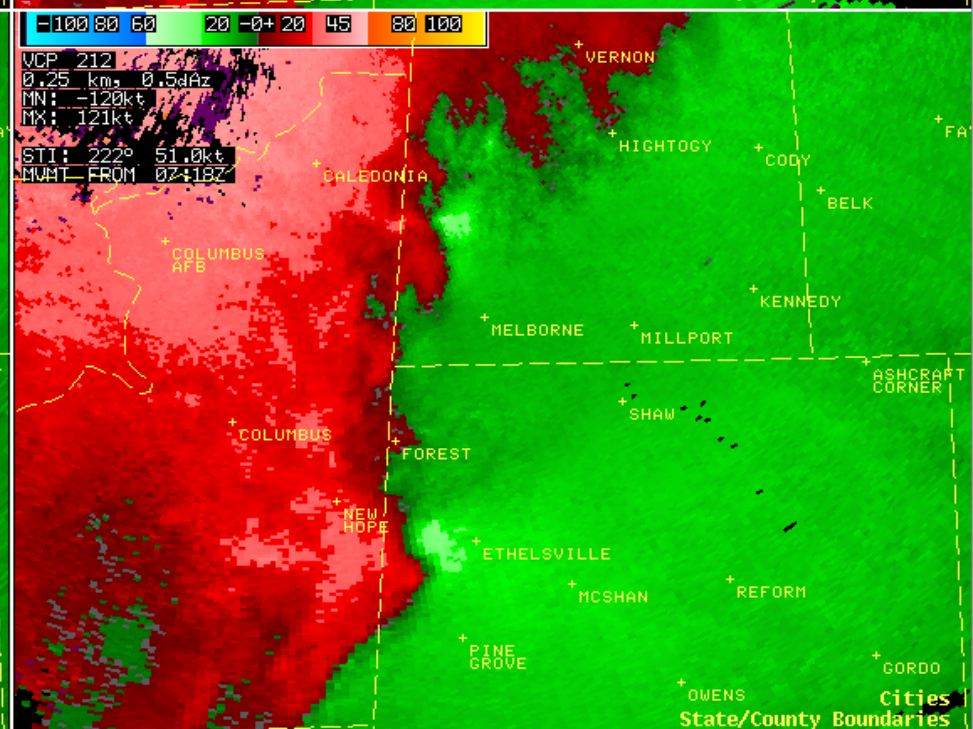
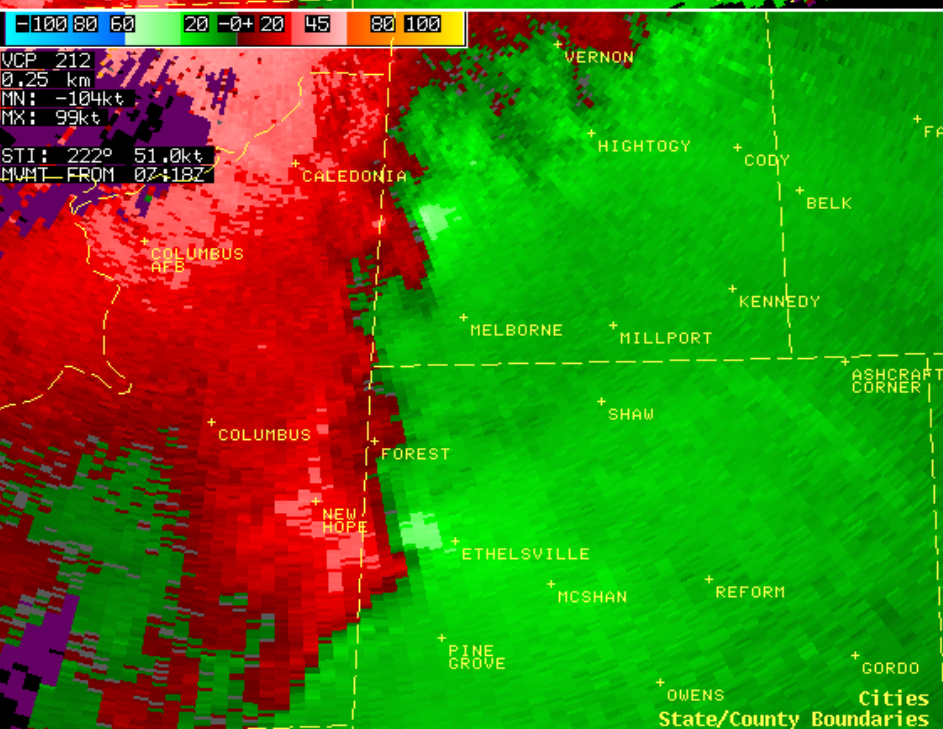
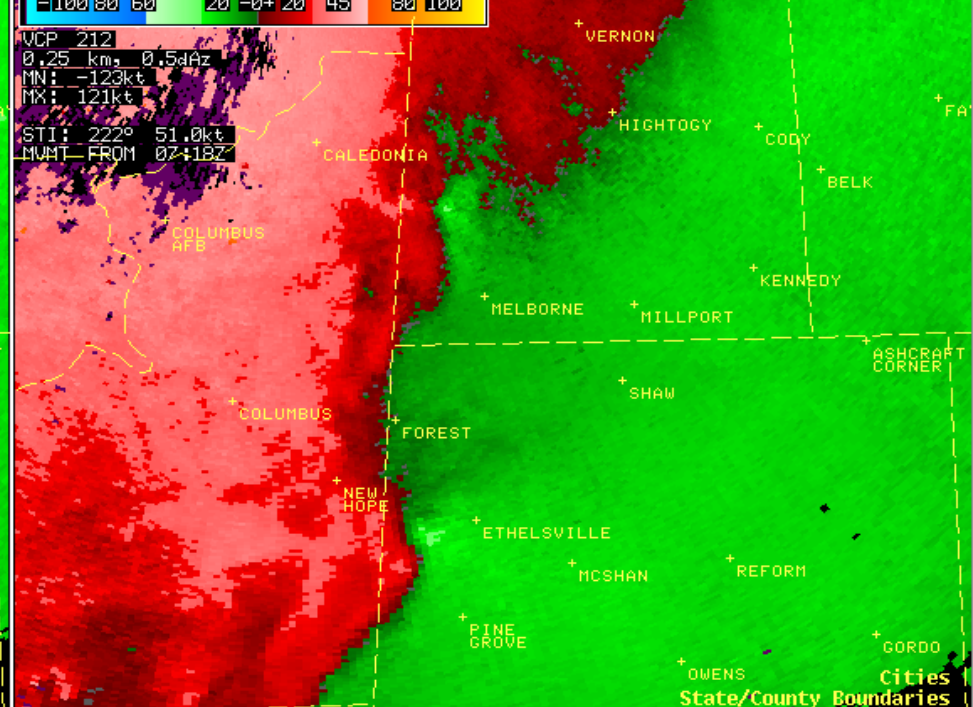
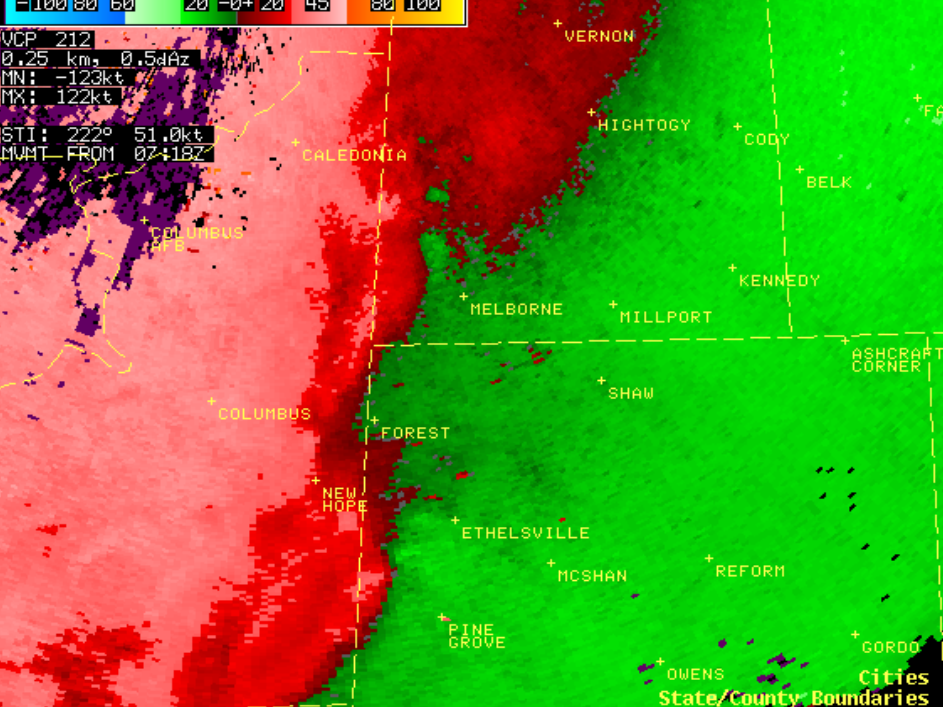


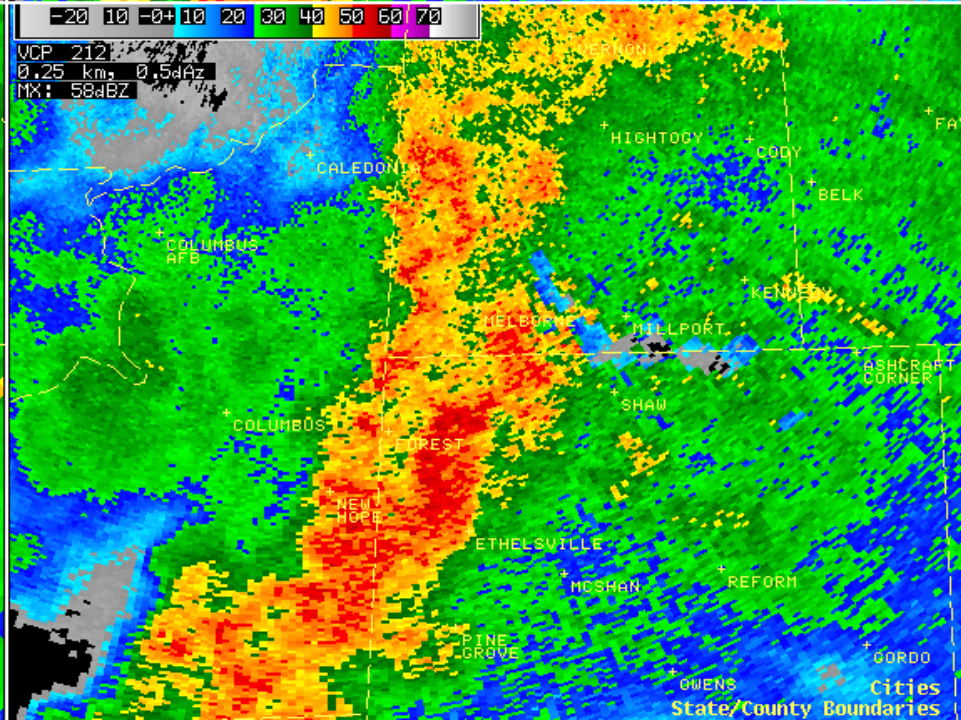
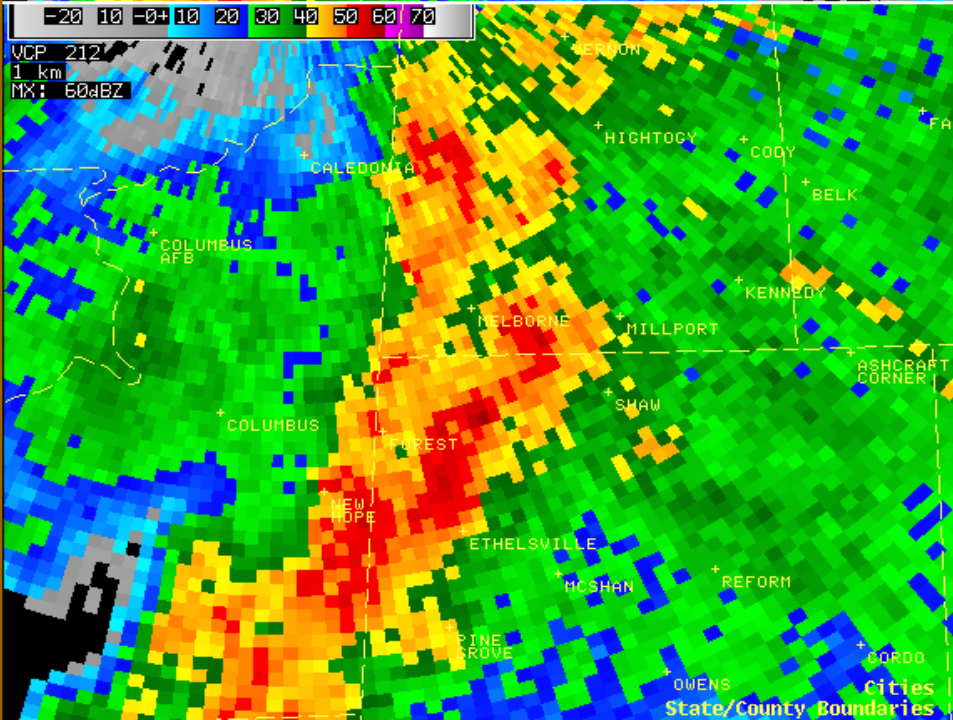
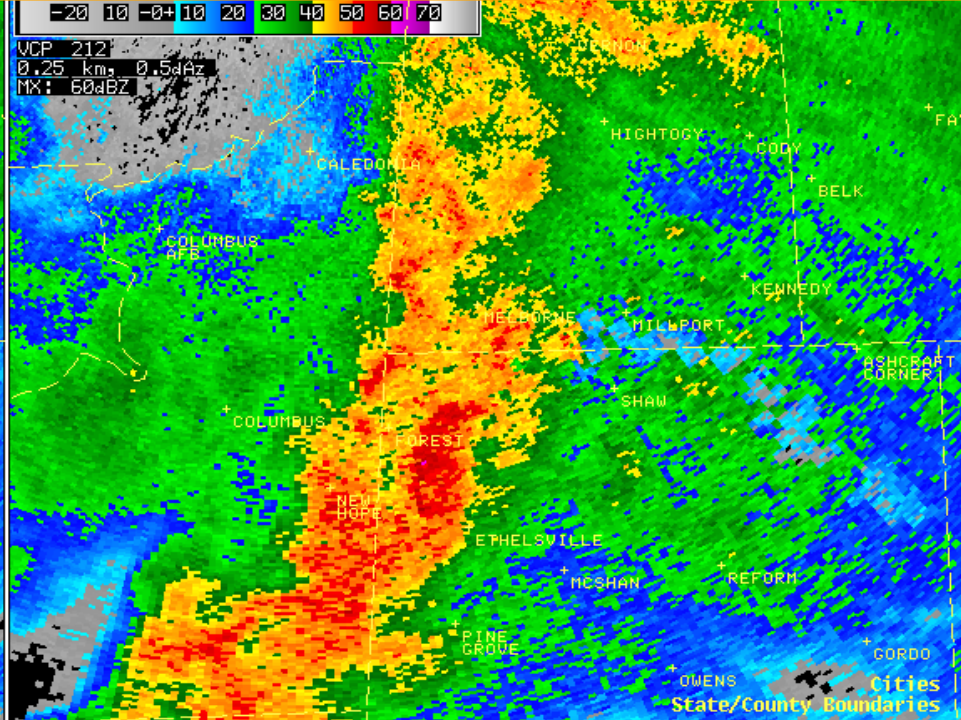
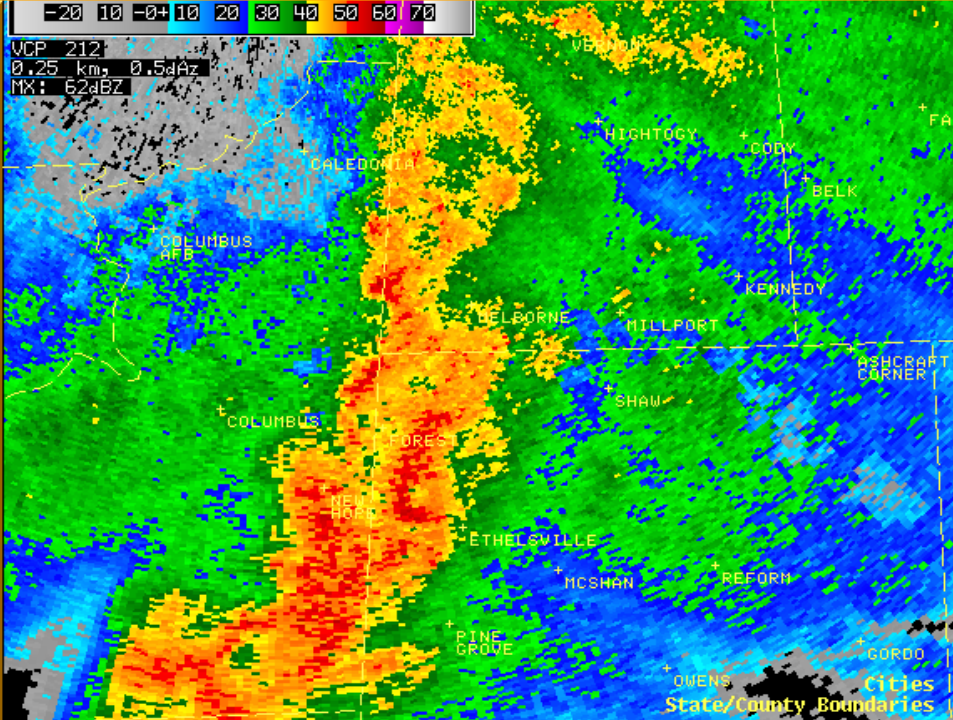


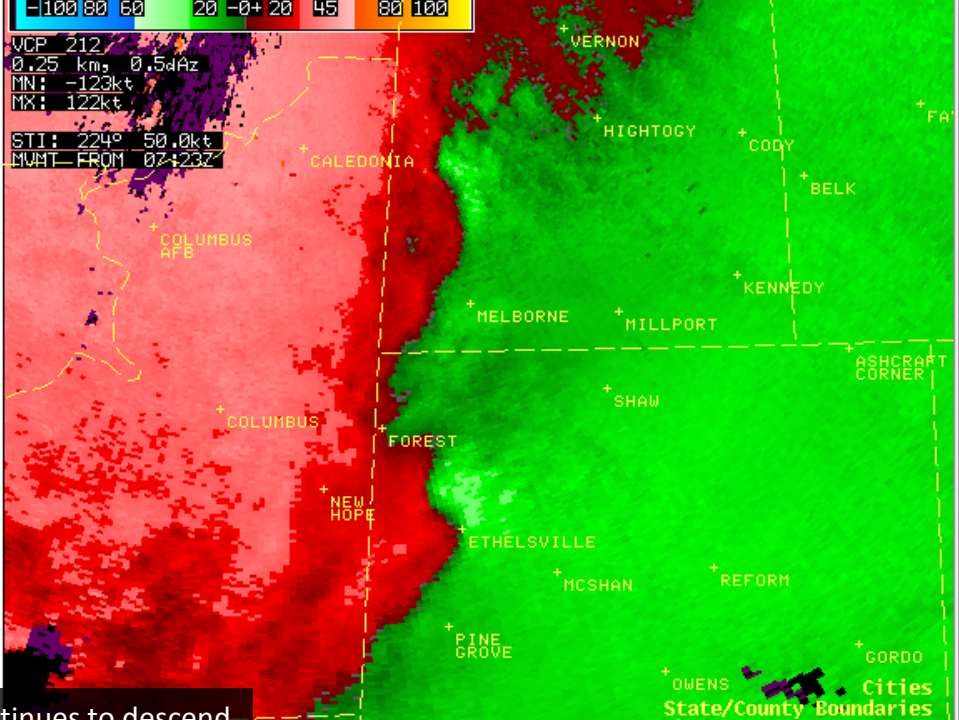
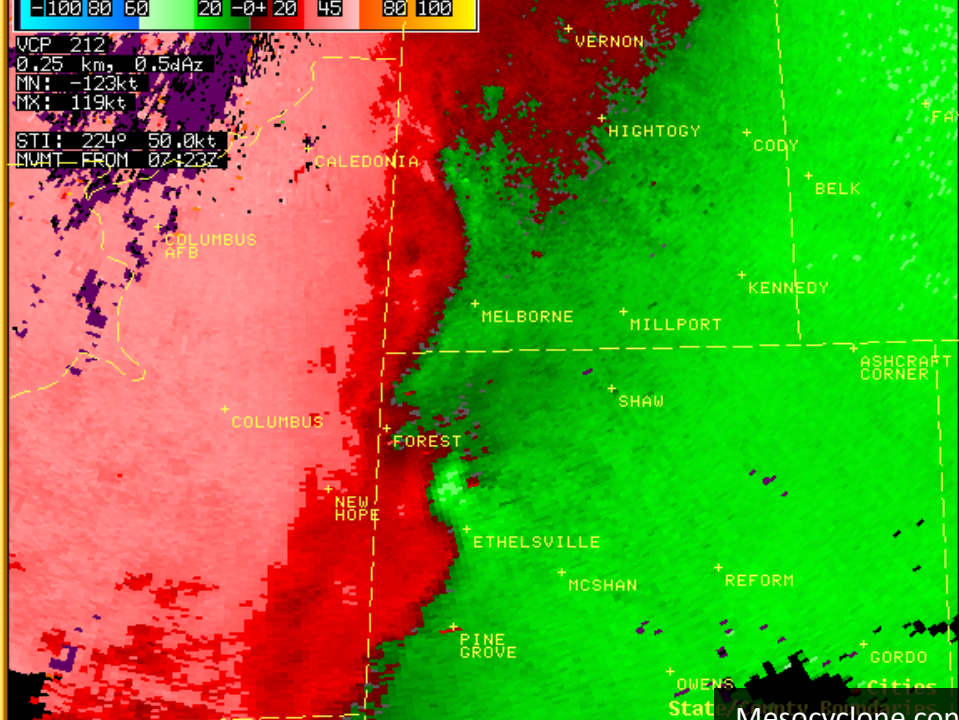




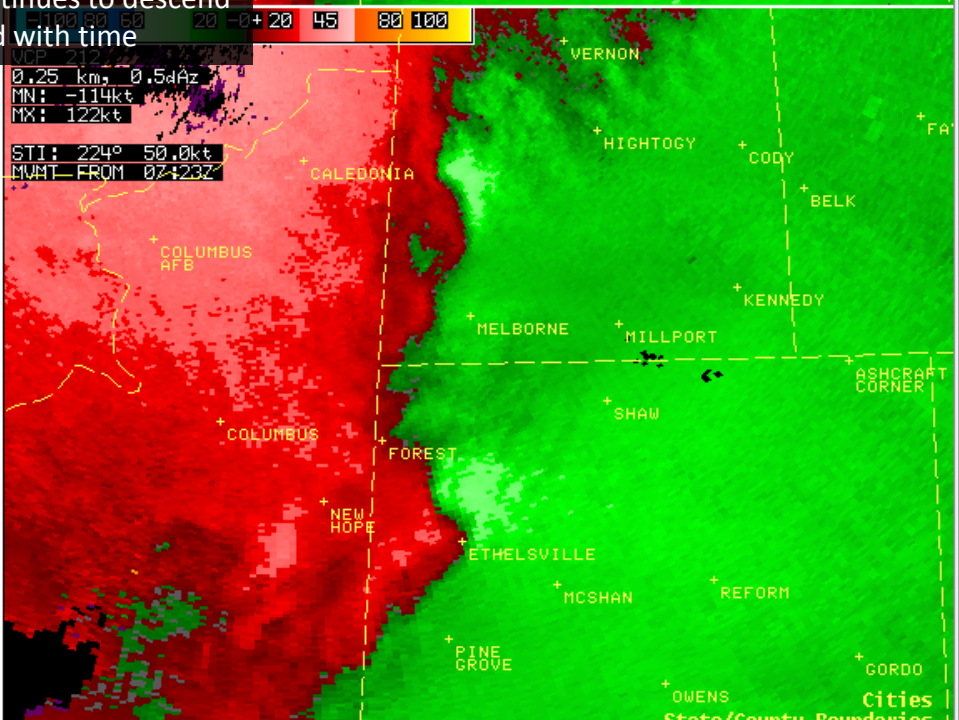
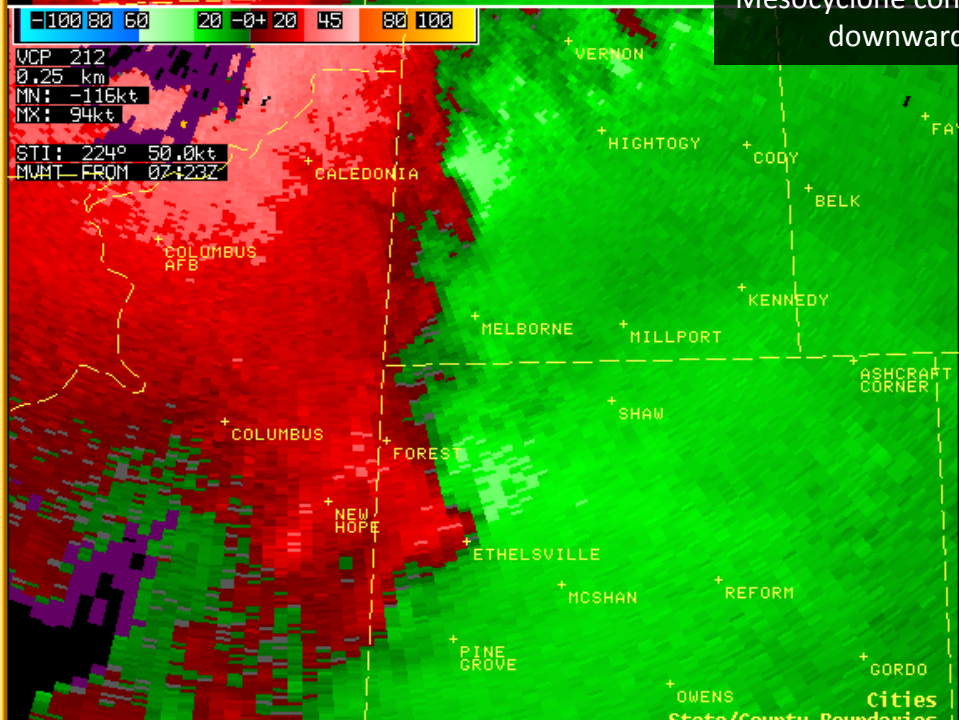


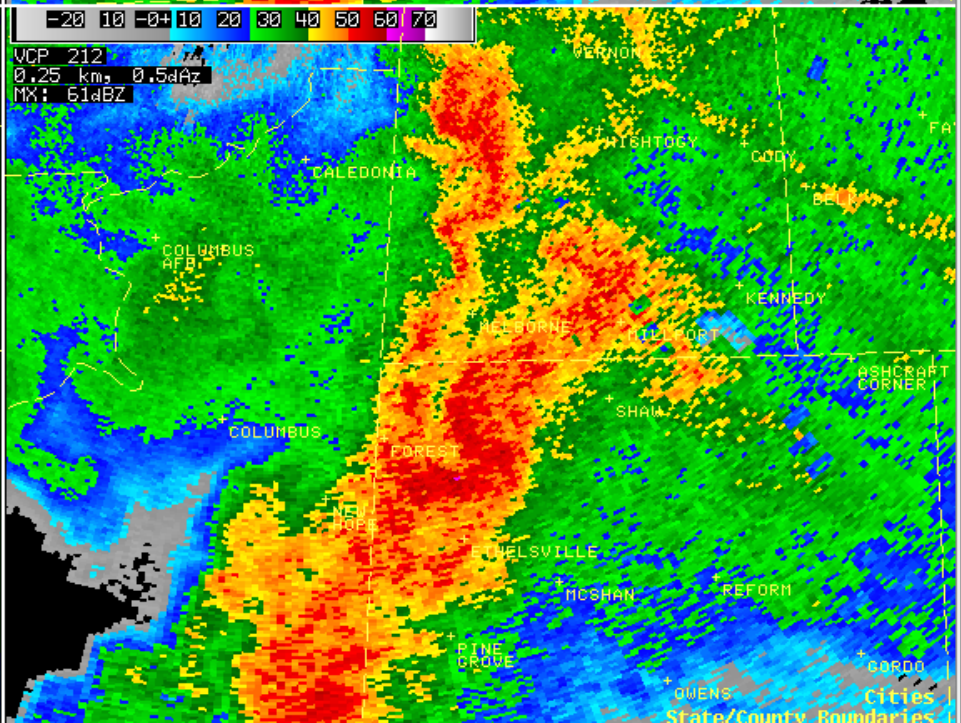
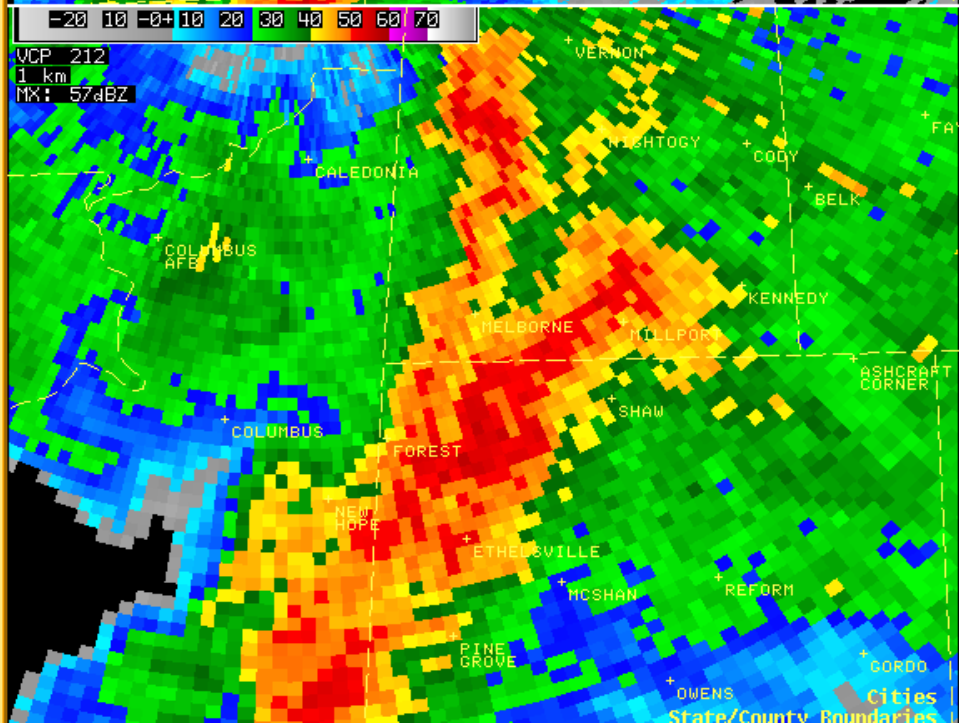
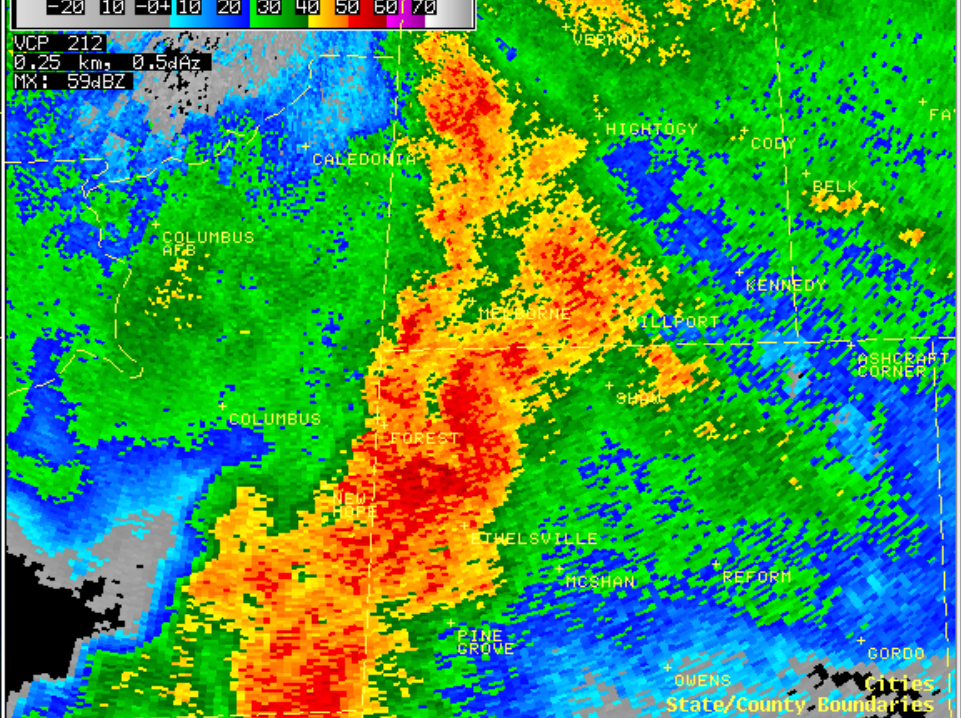
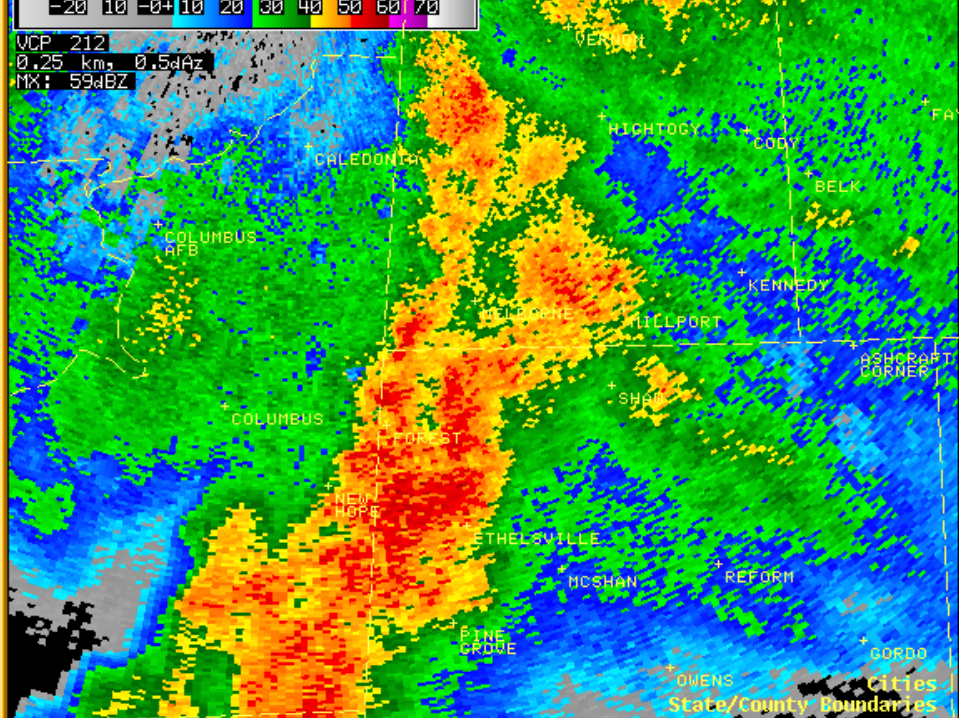


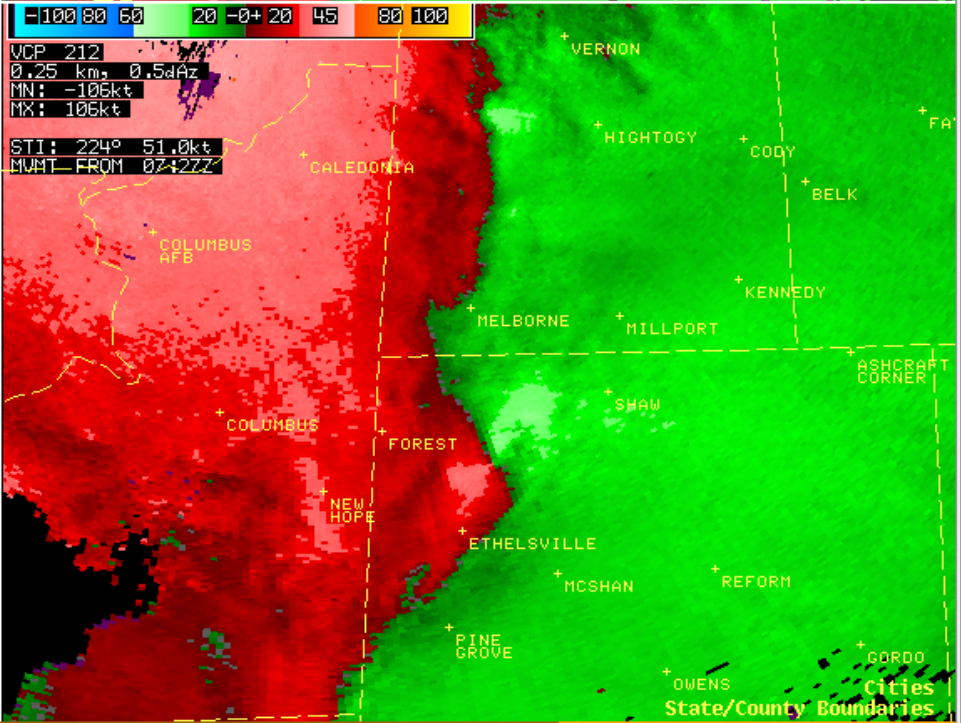
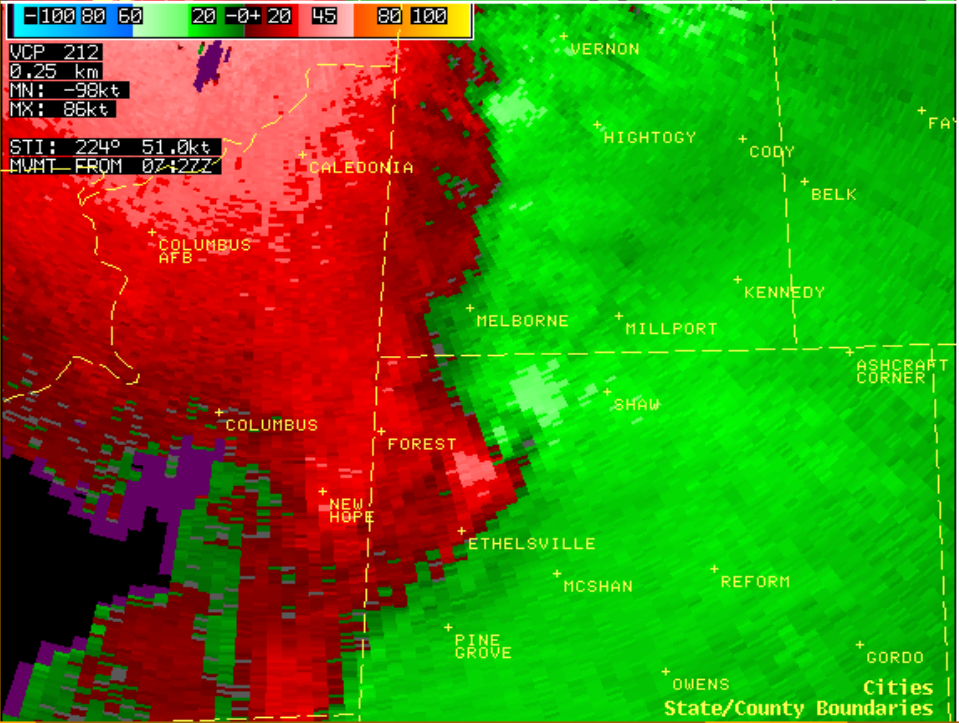
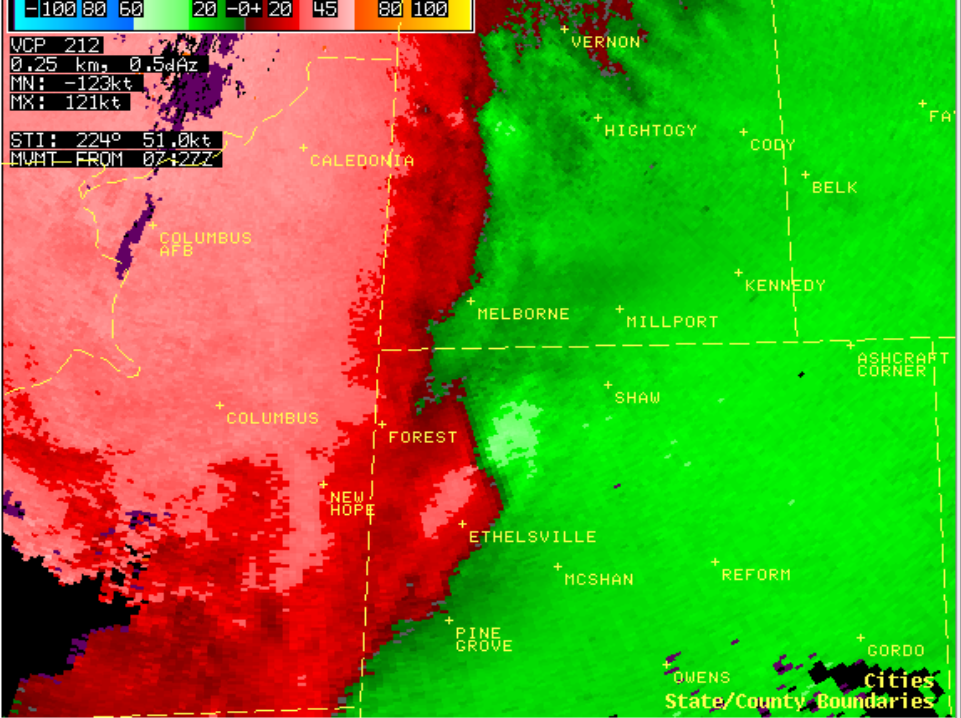
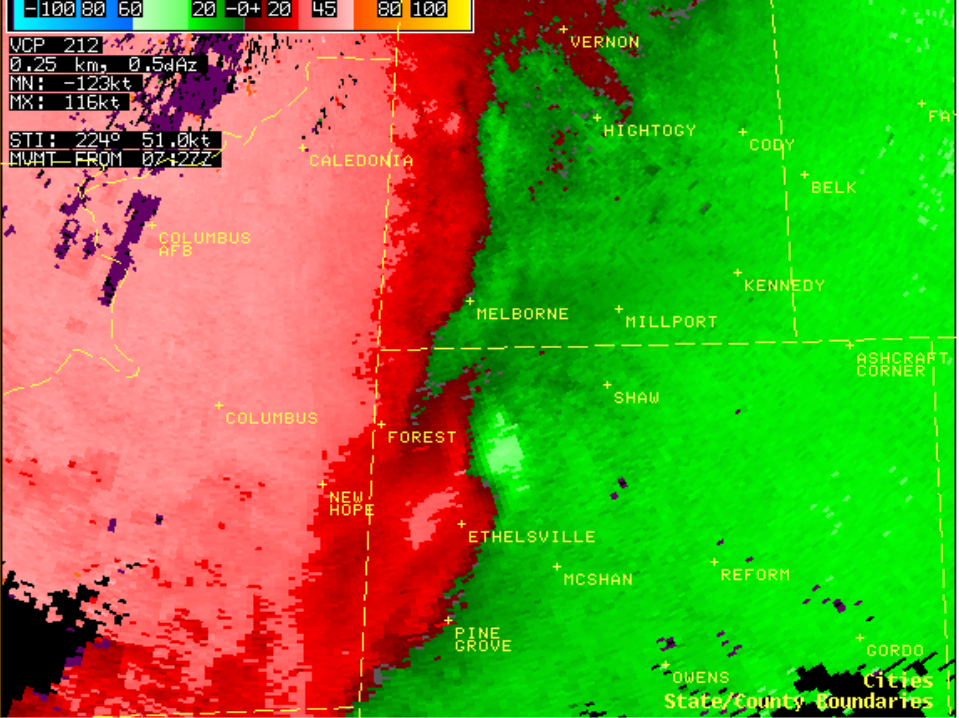


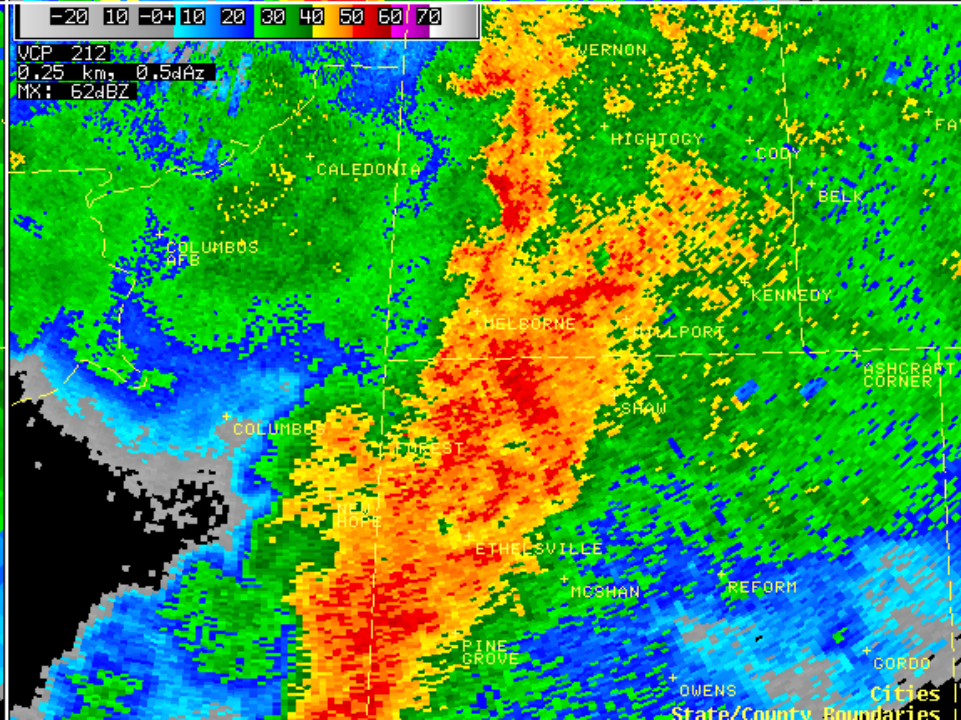
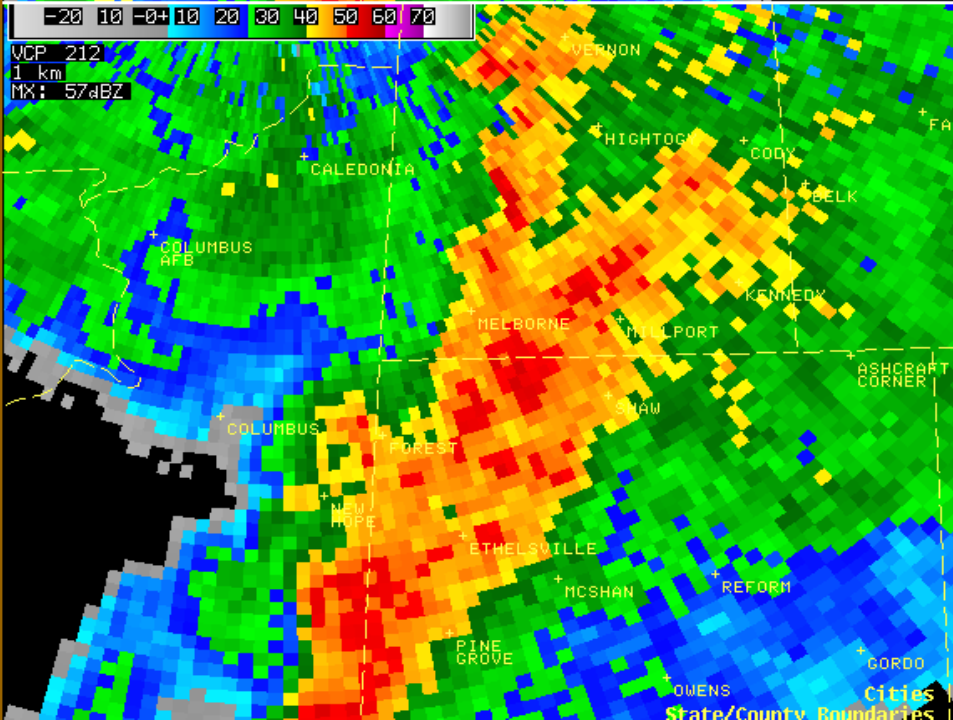
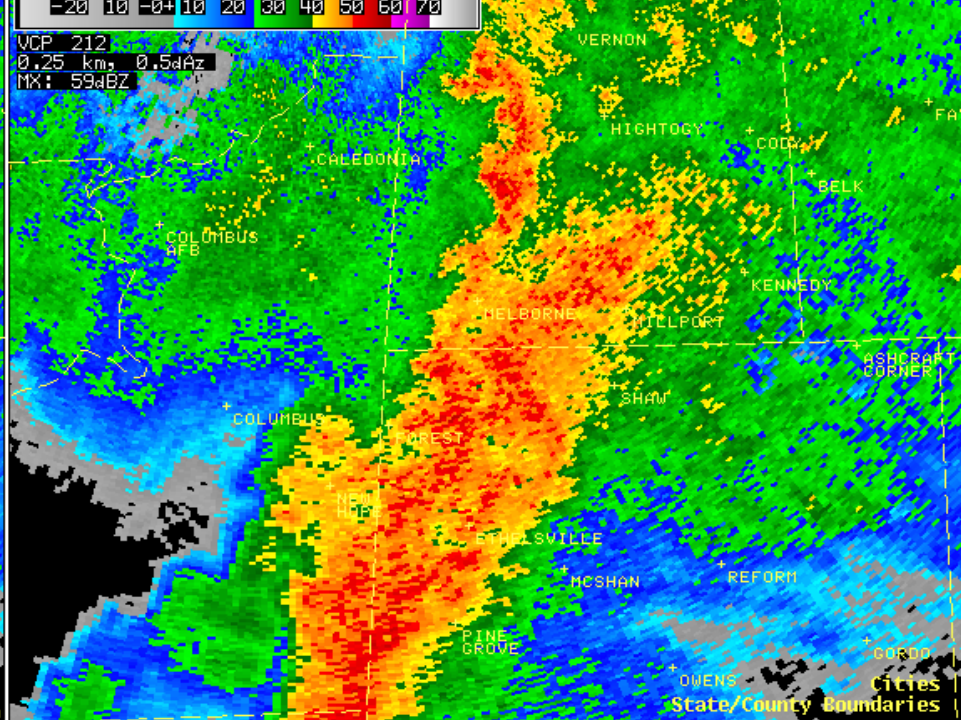
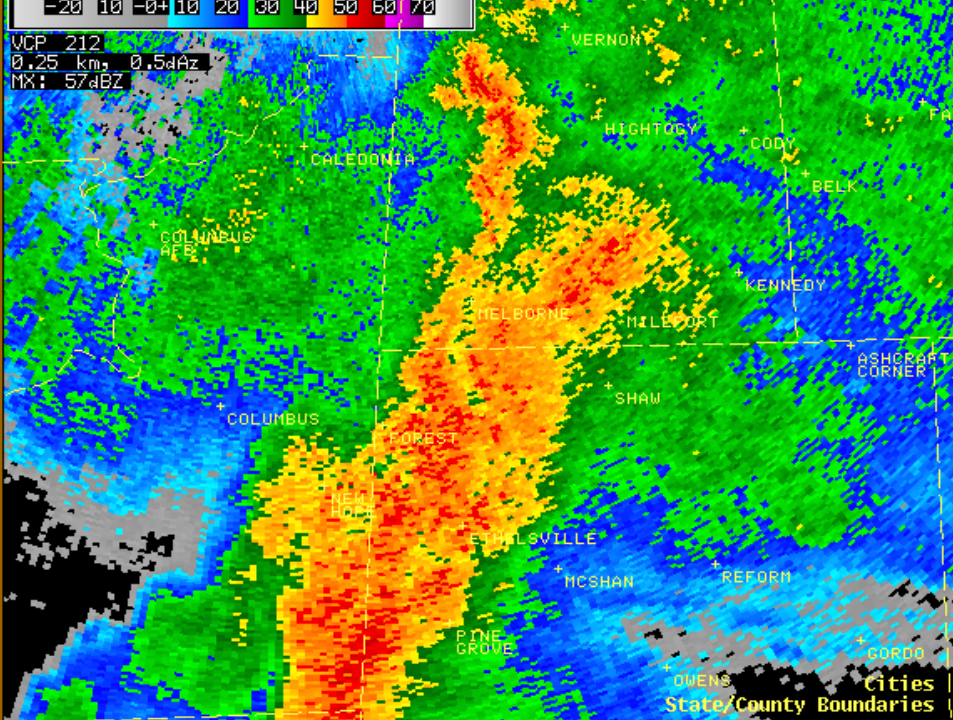


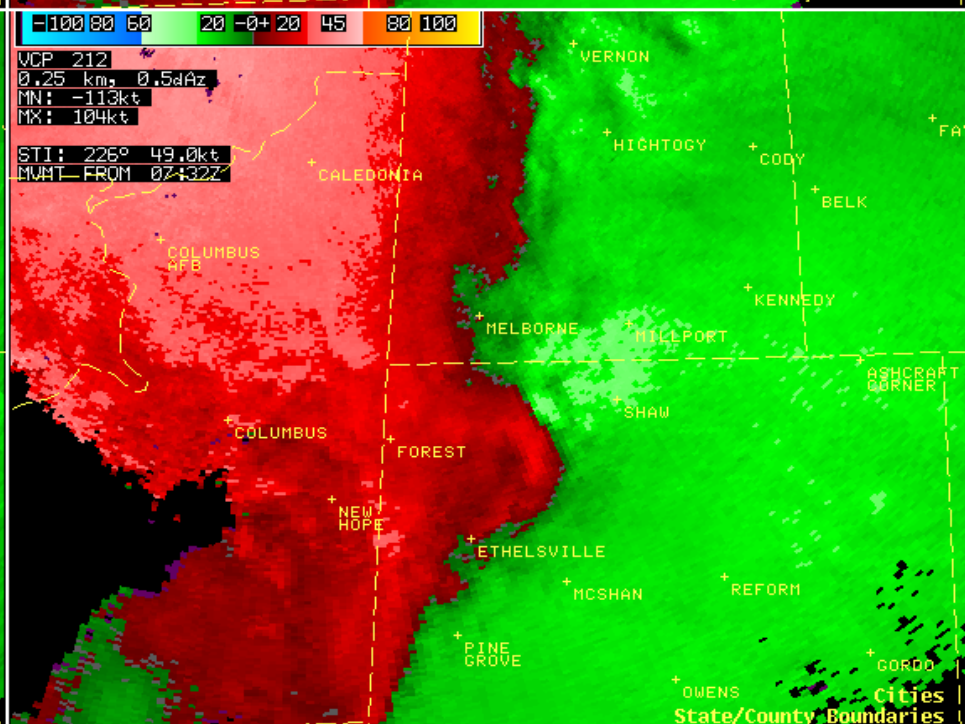
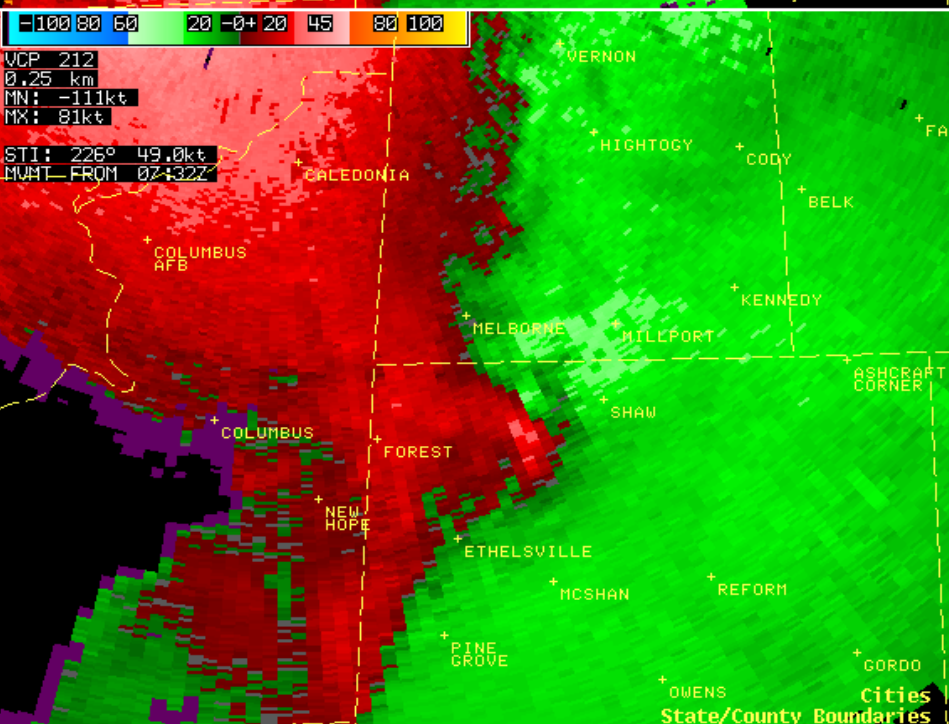
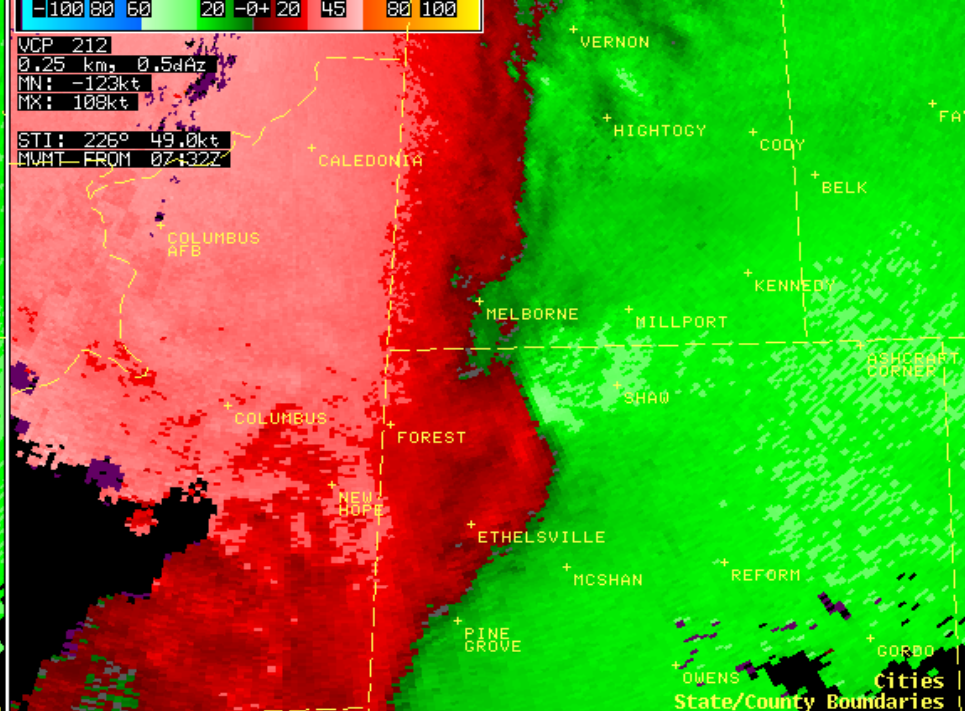
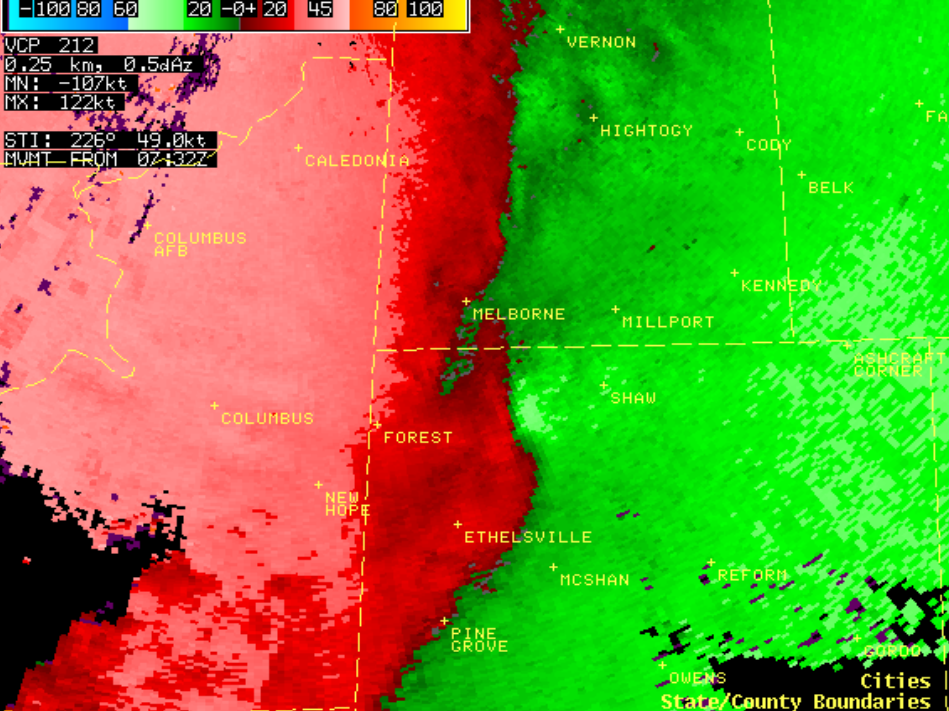
Mesocyclone continues to descend
downward with time

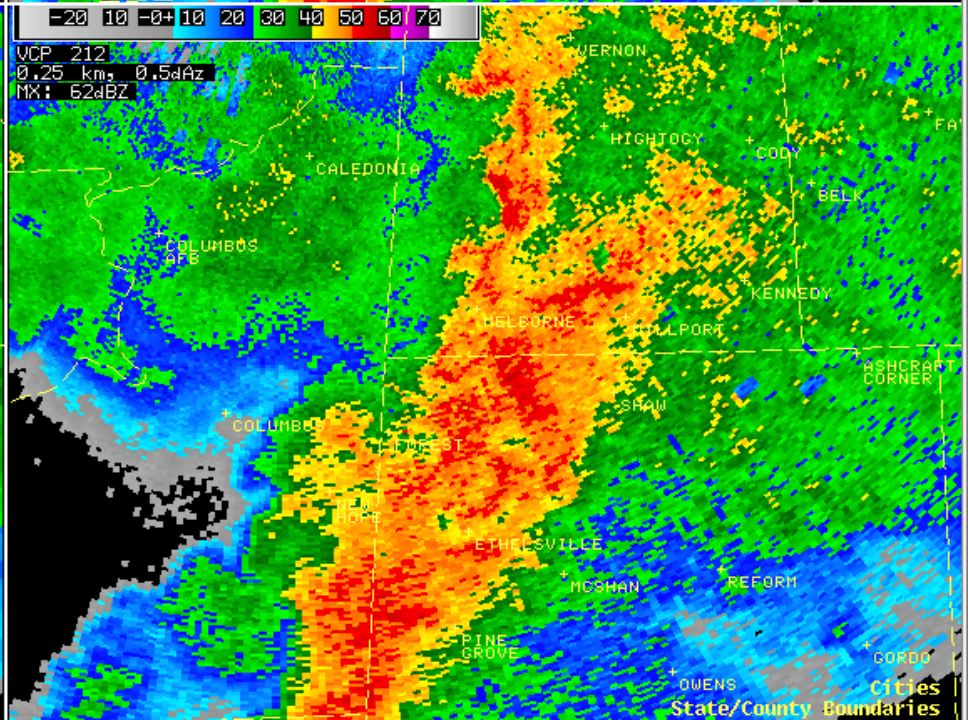
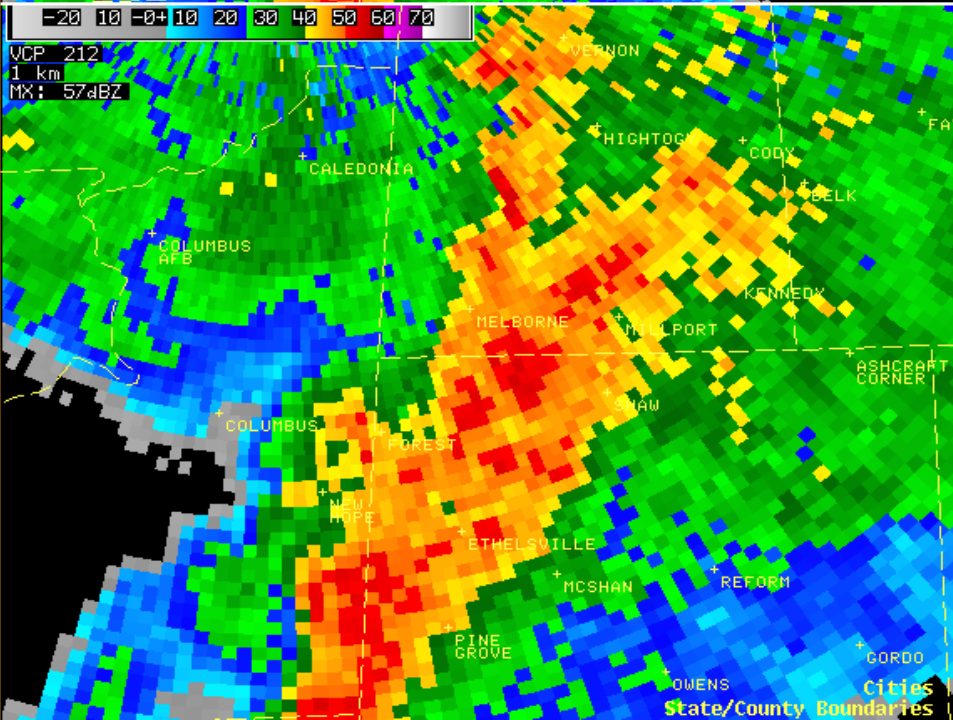
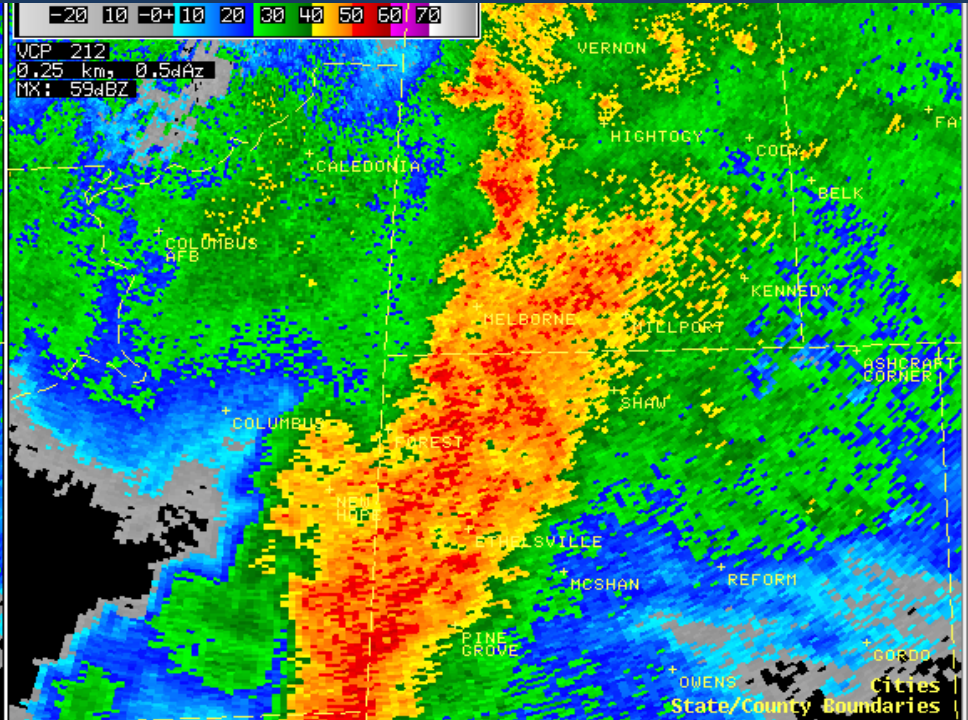
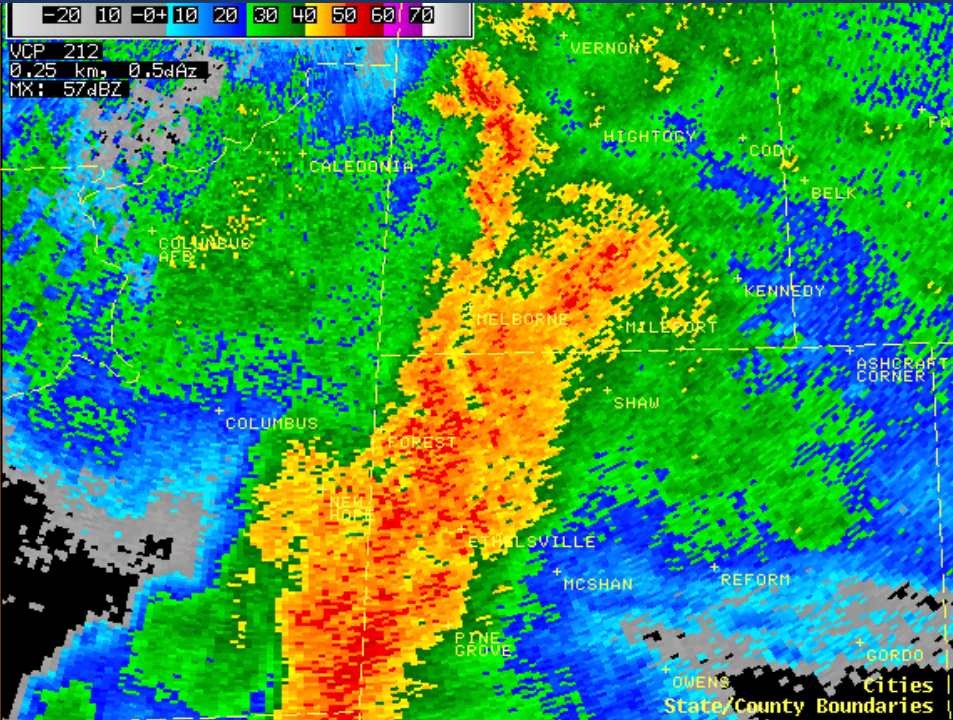


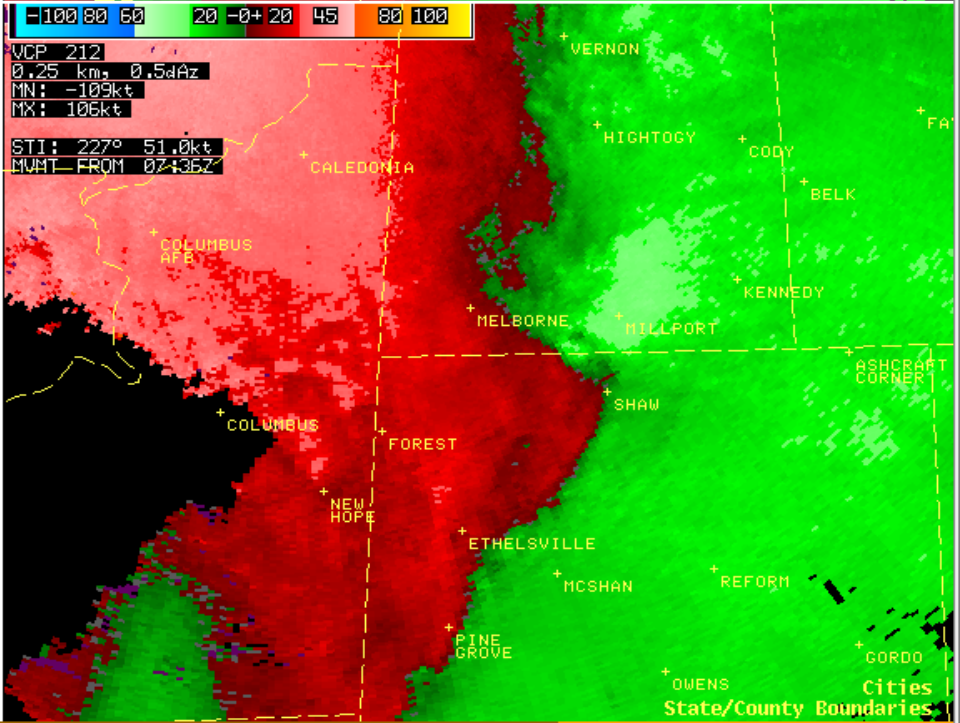
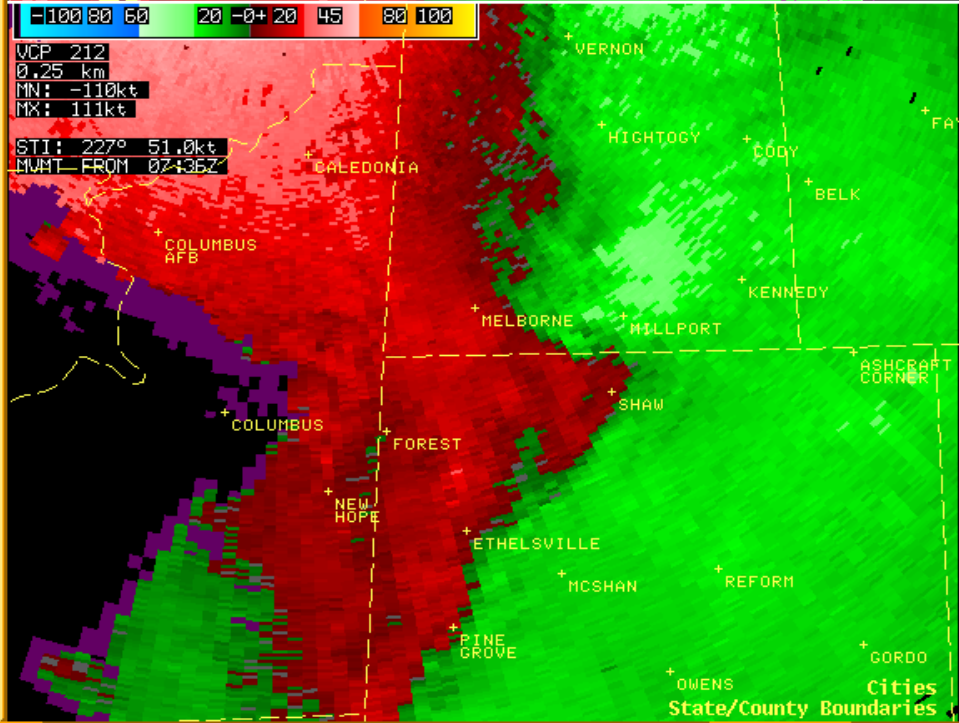
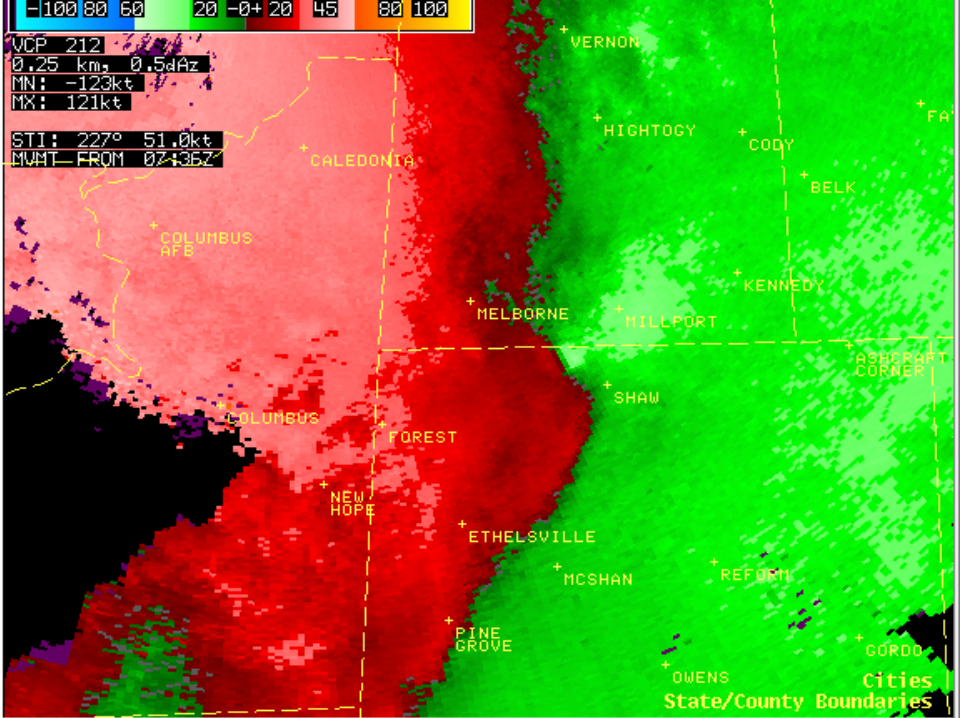
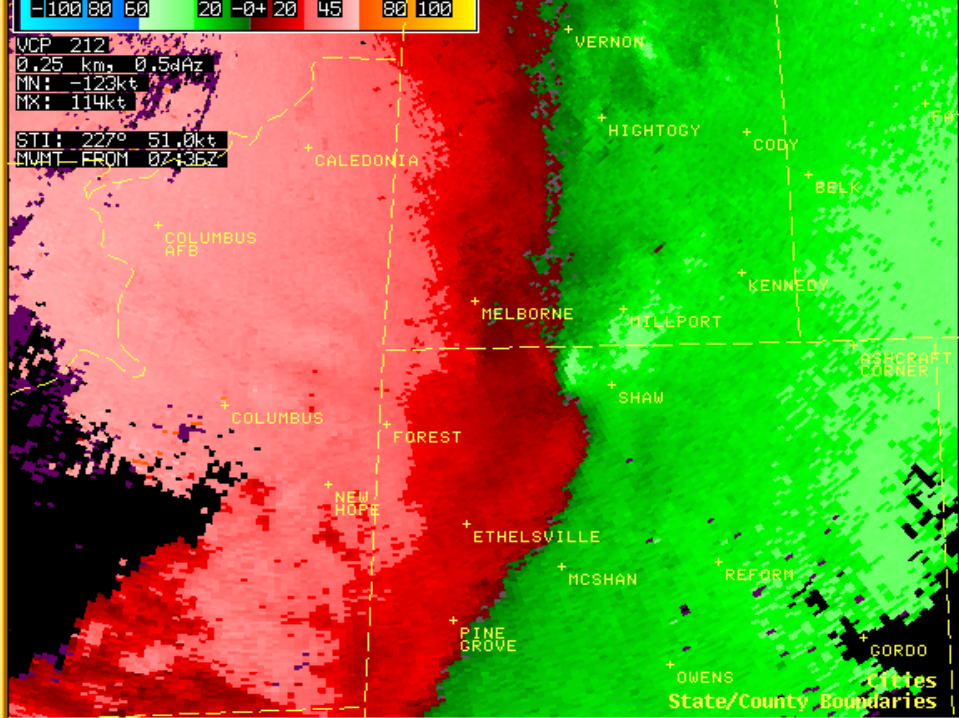


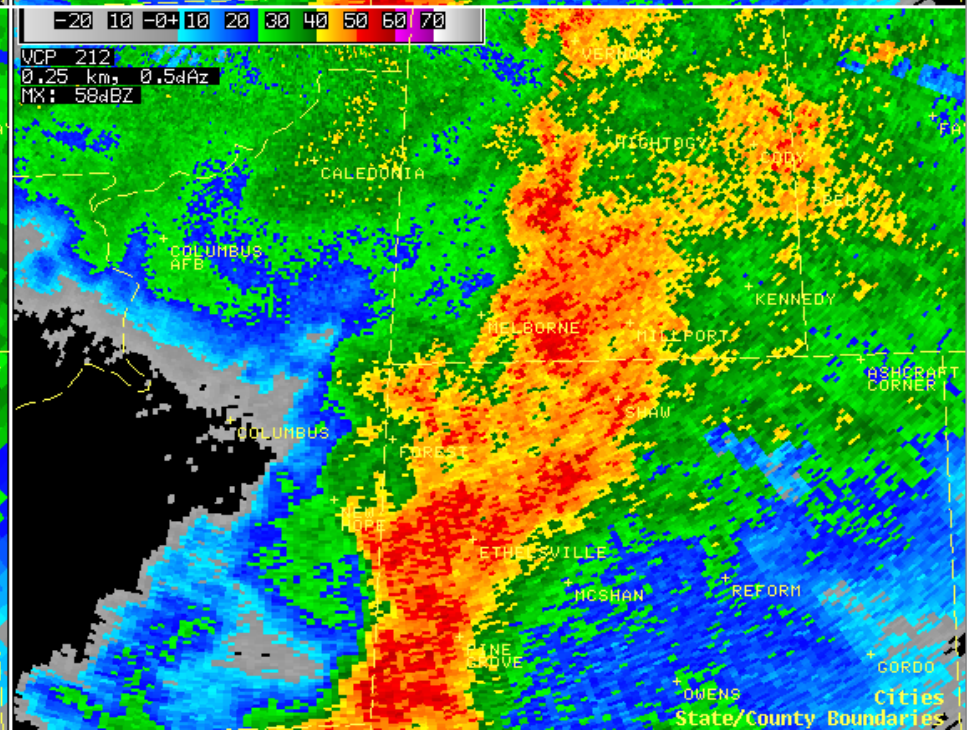
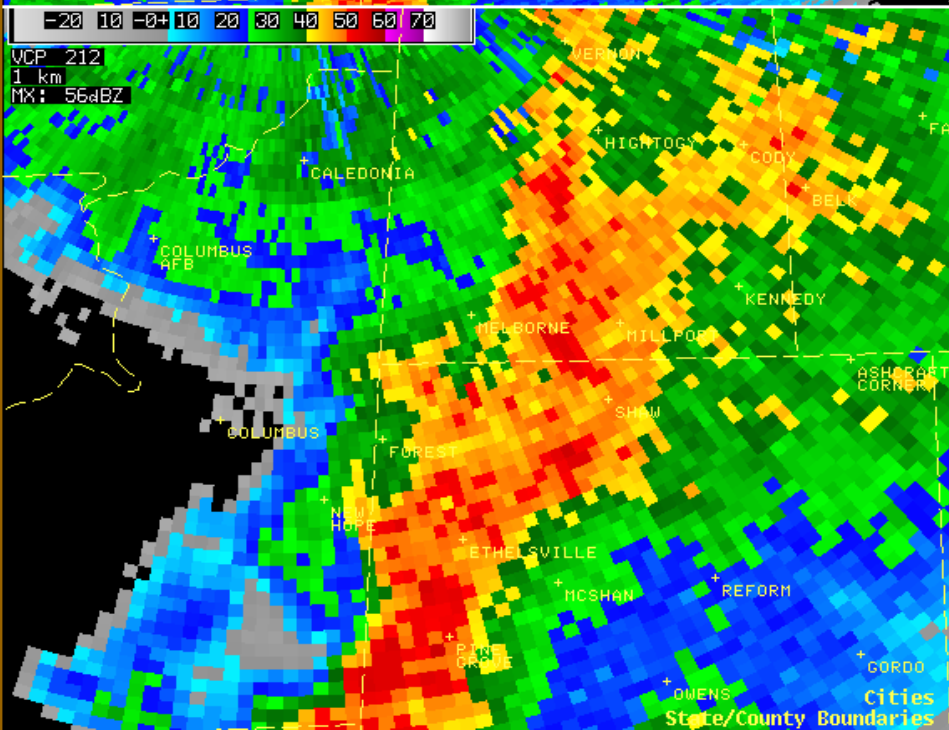
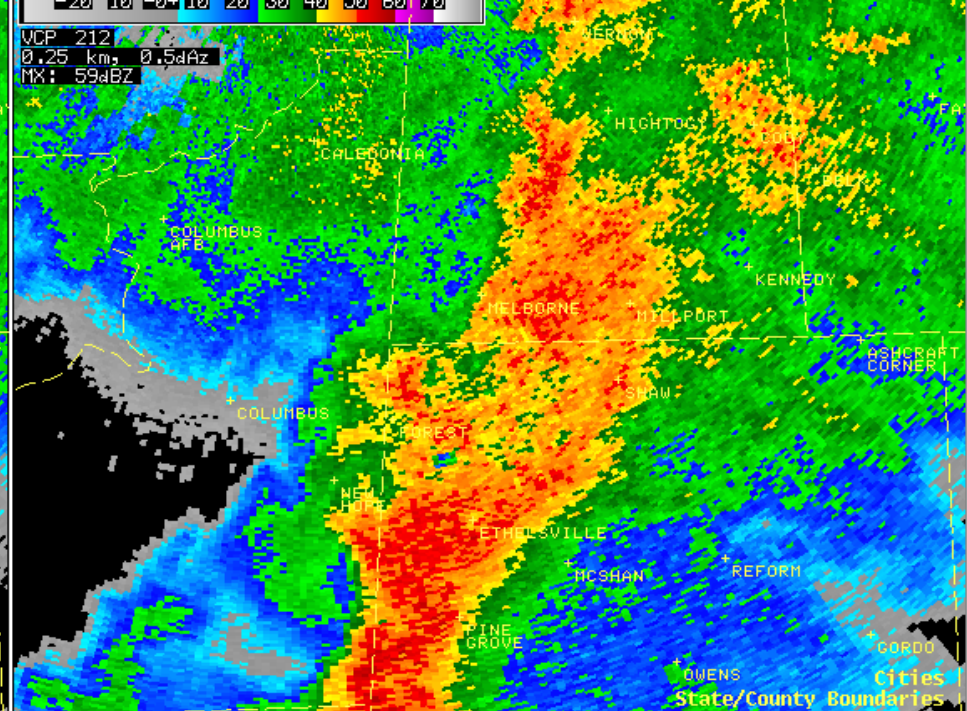
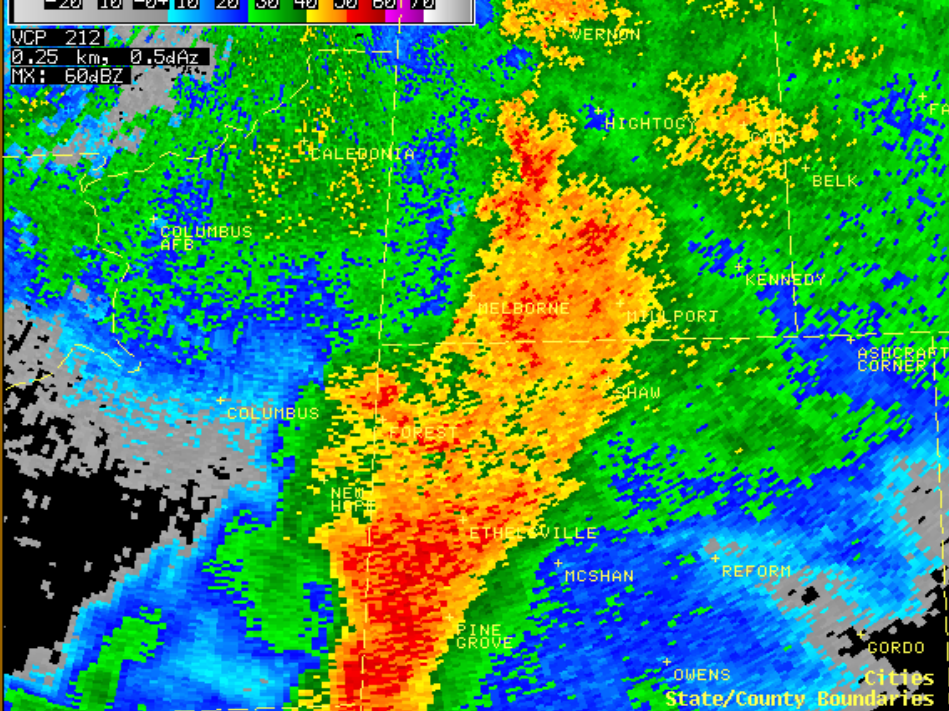


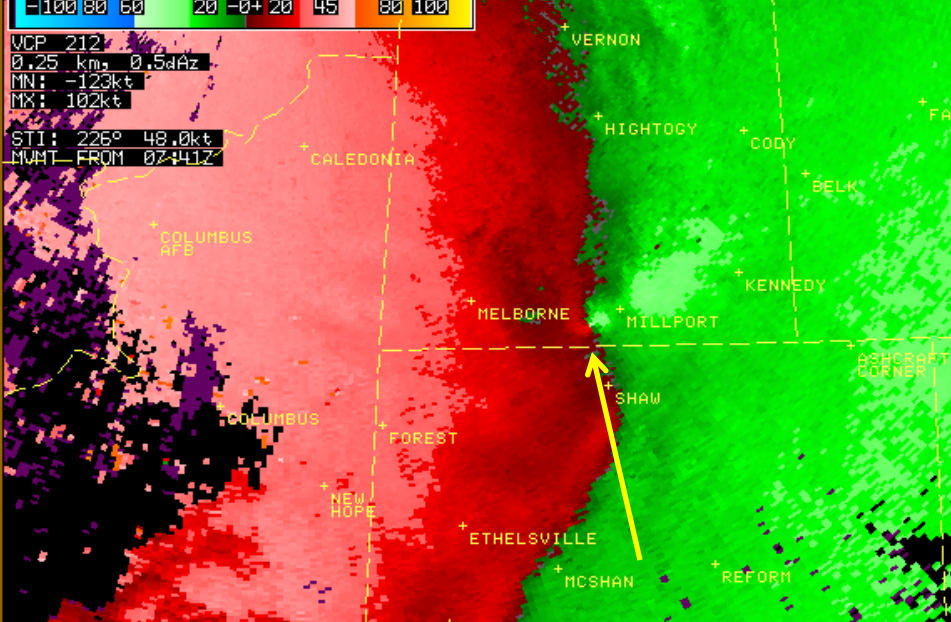




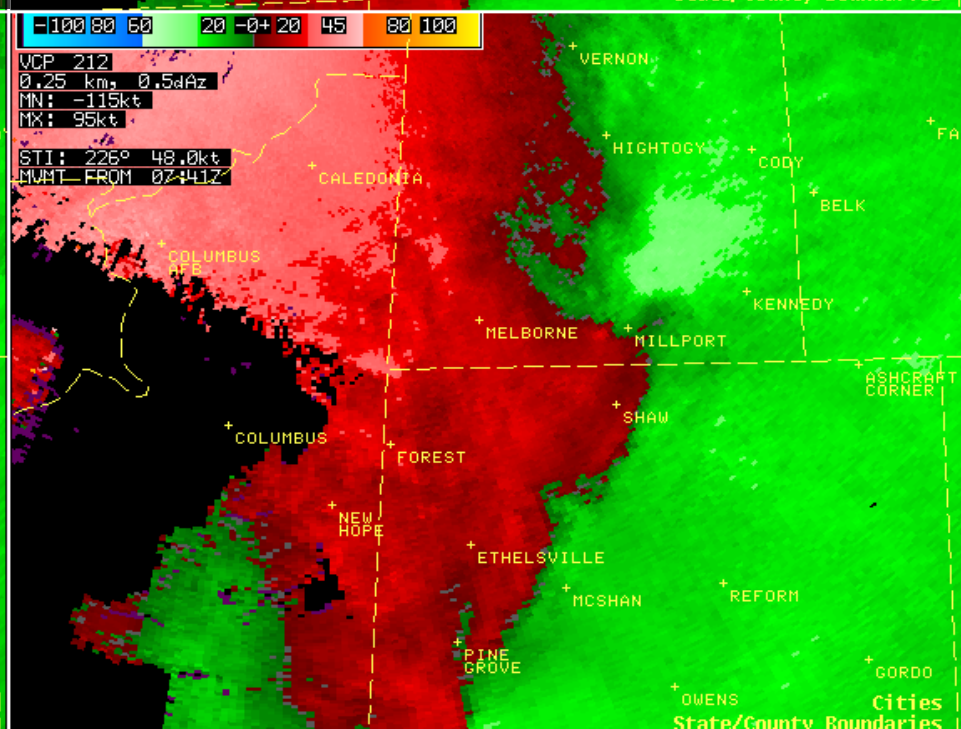
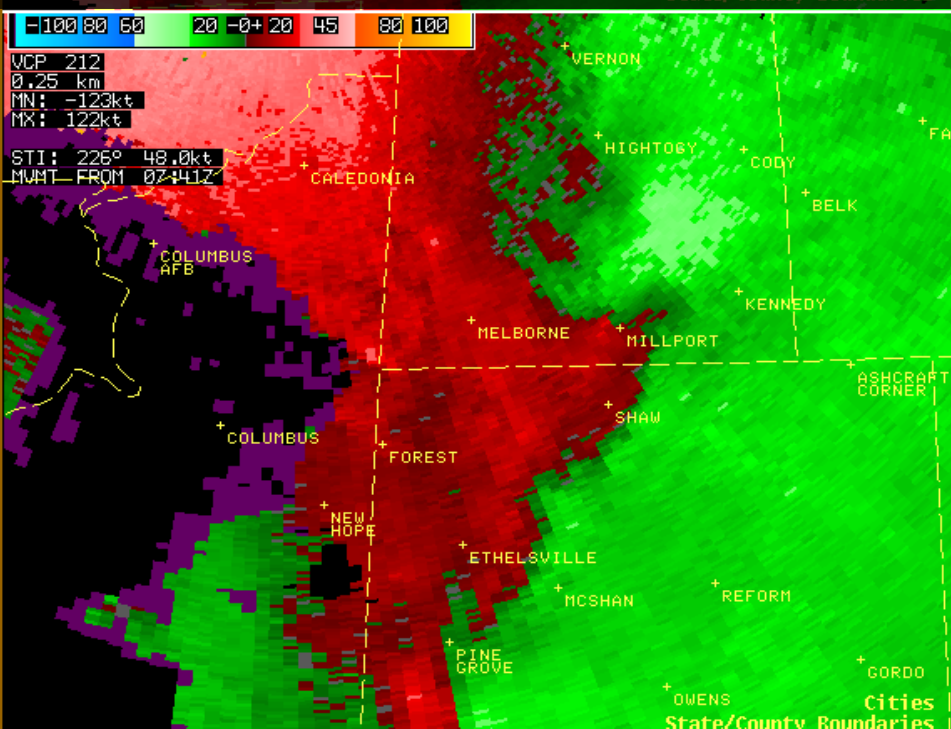
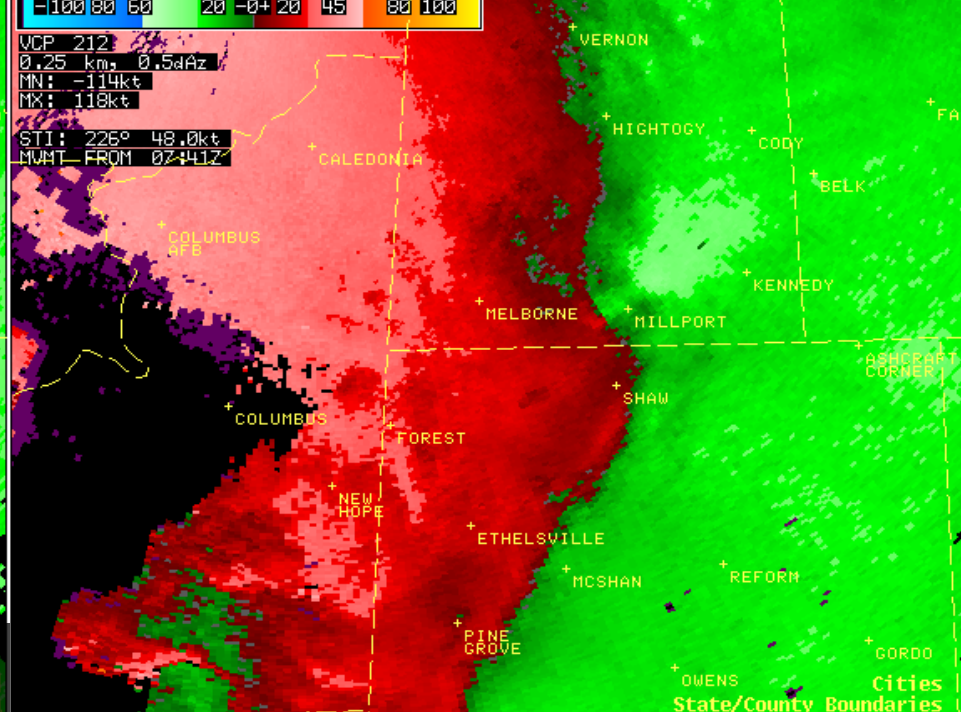


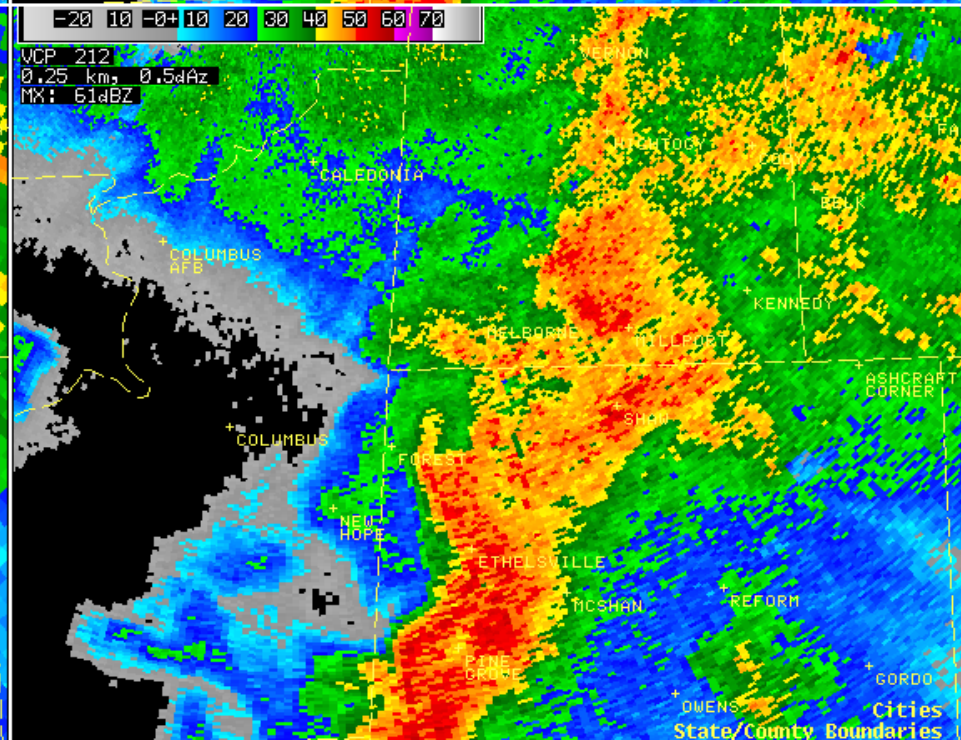
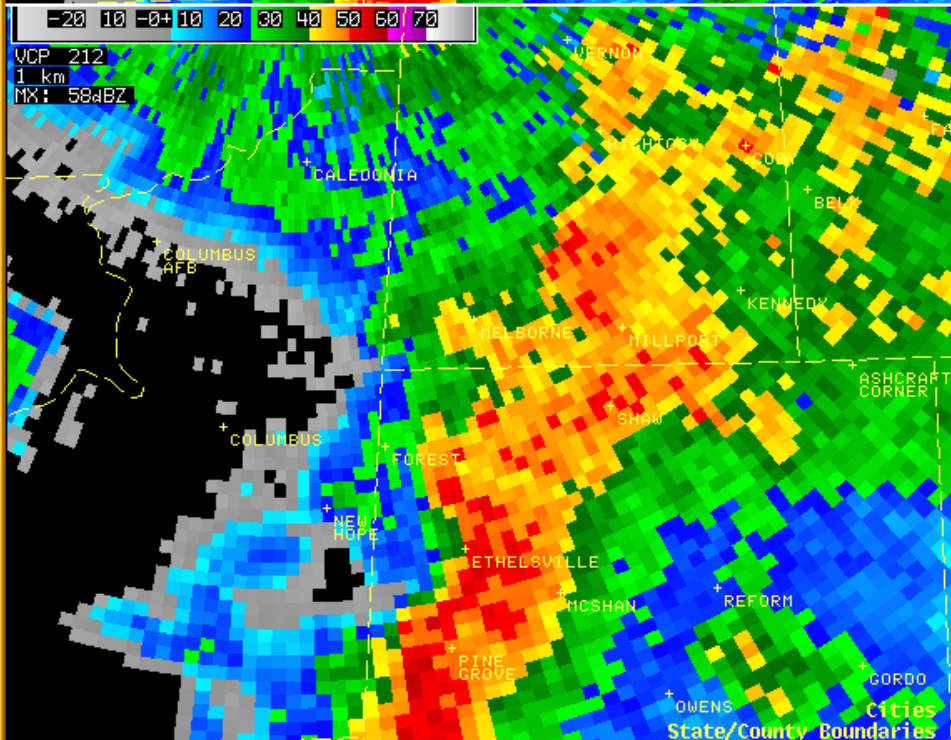
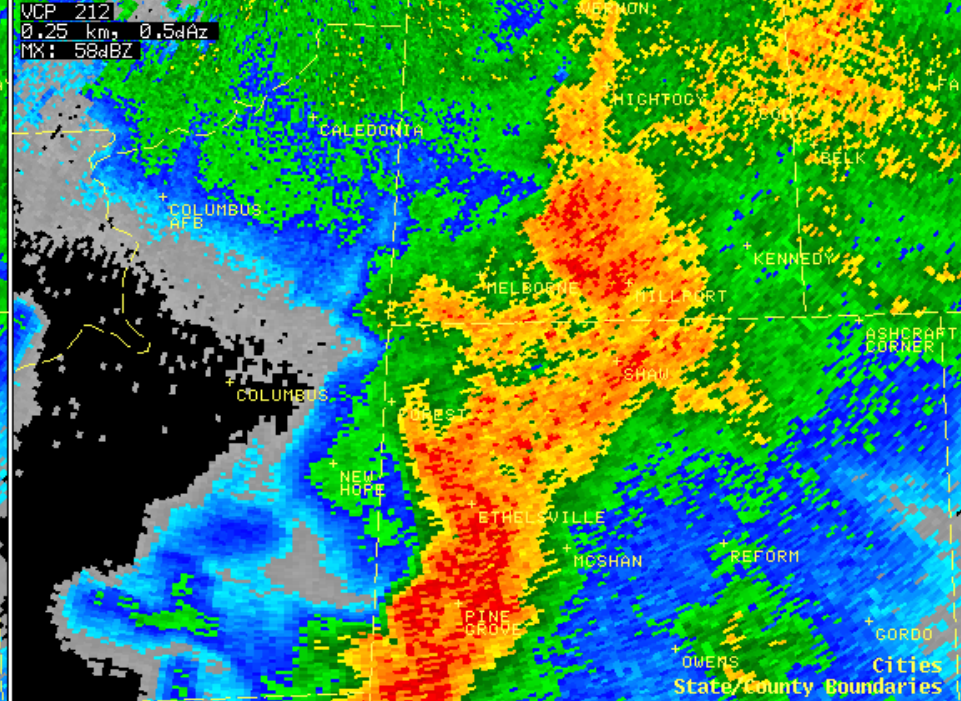
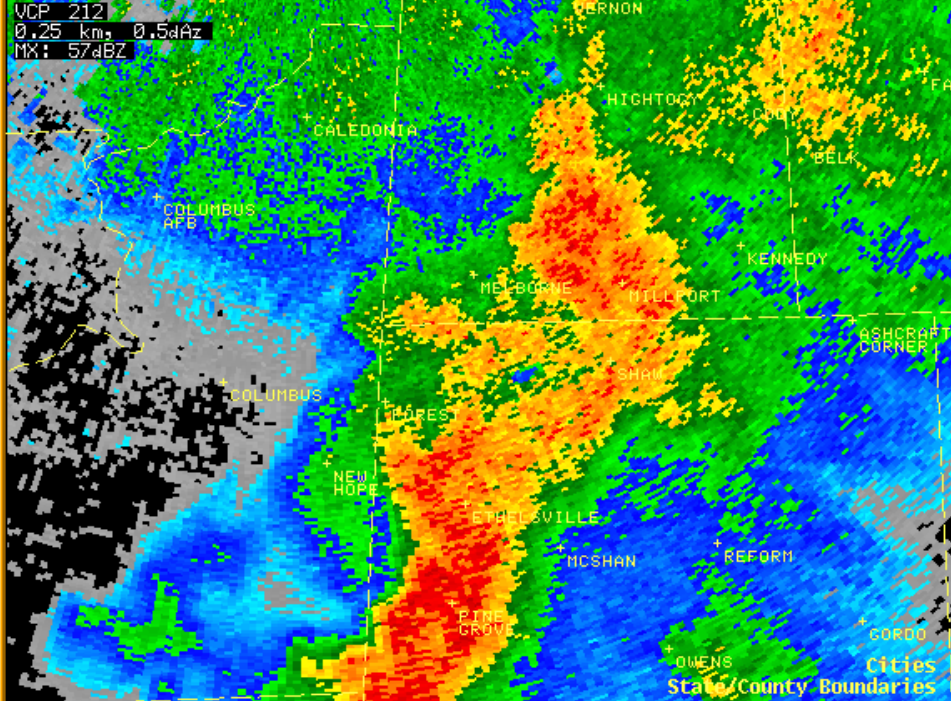


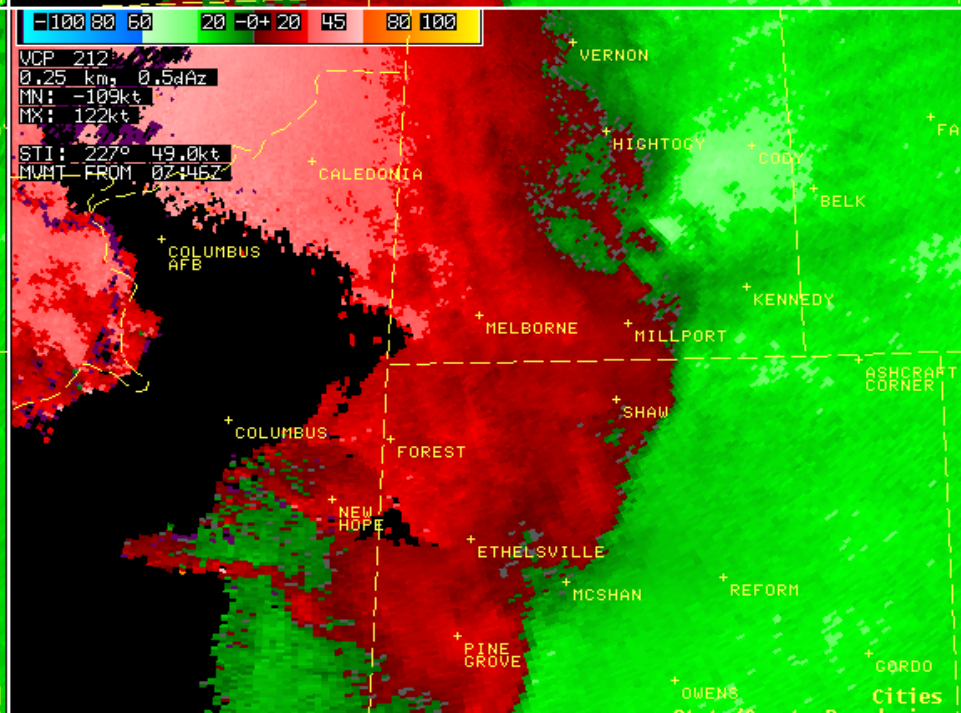
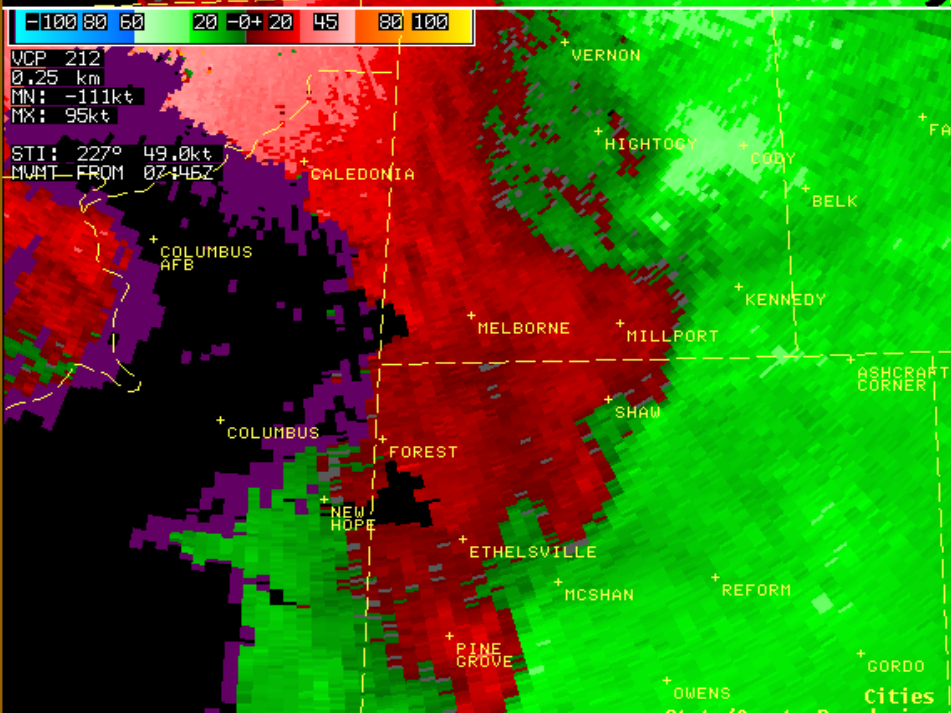
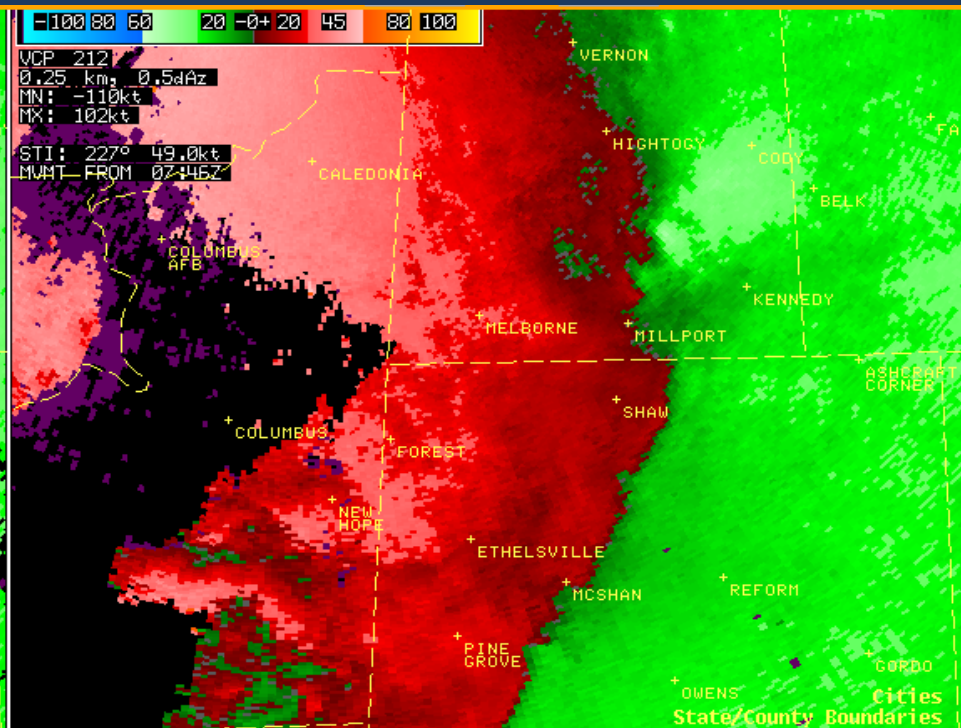
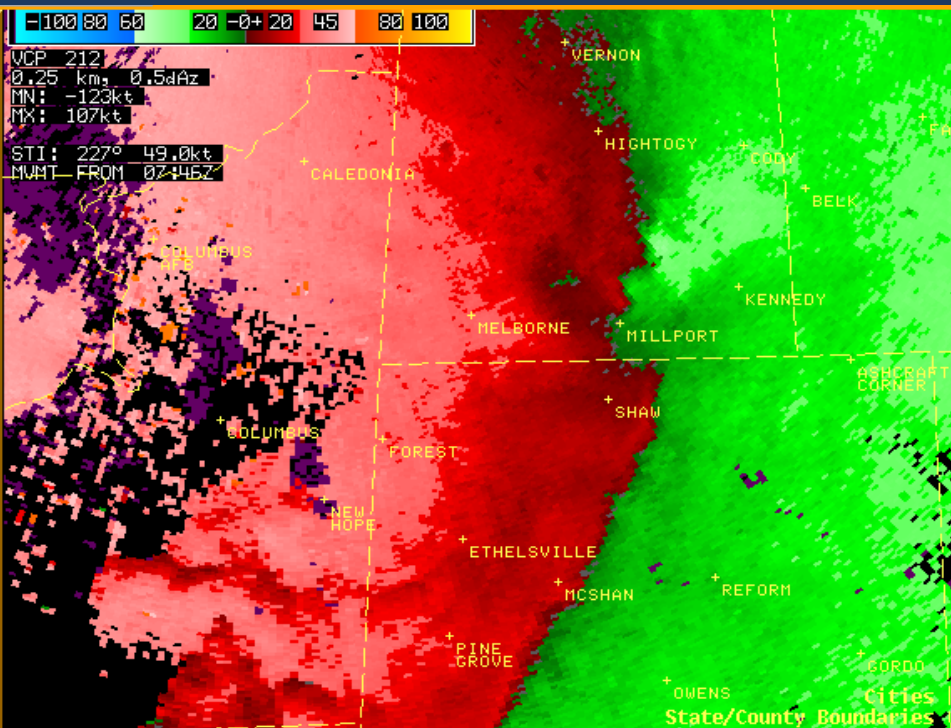


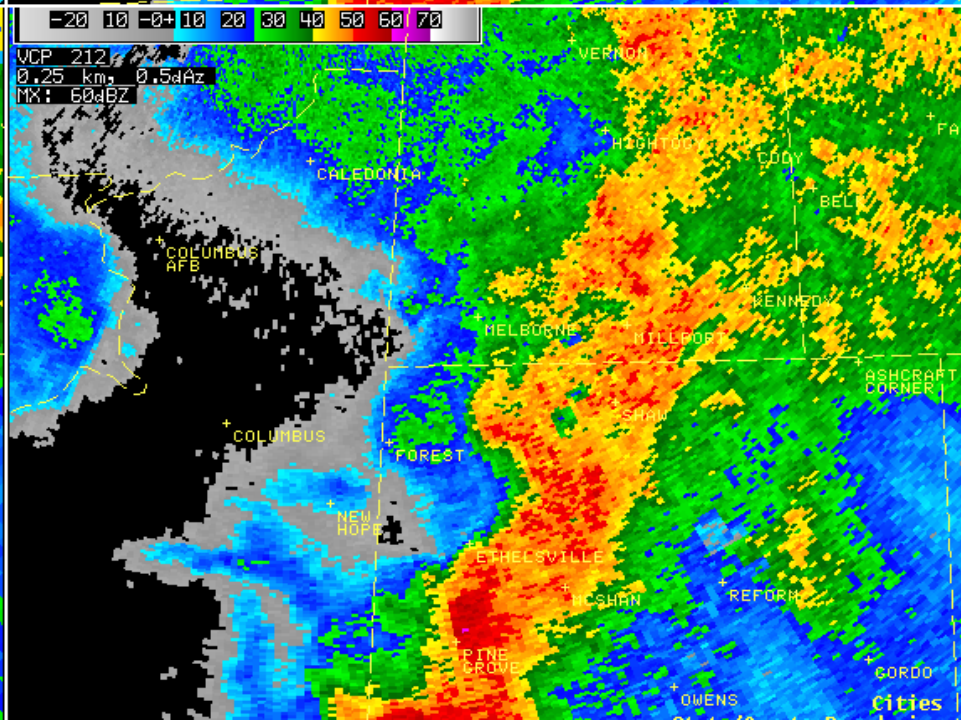
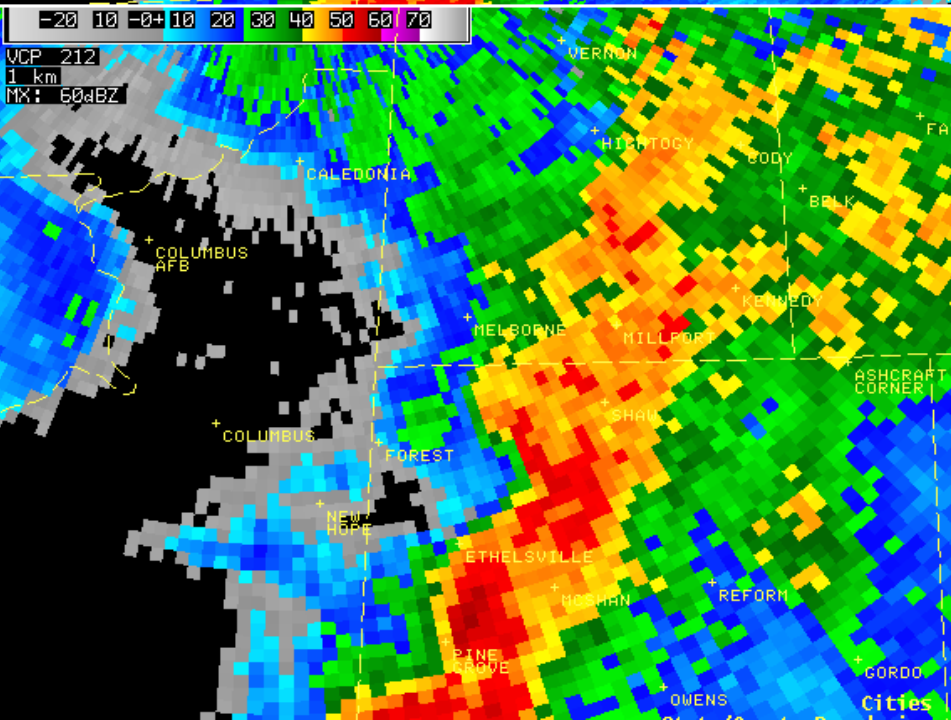
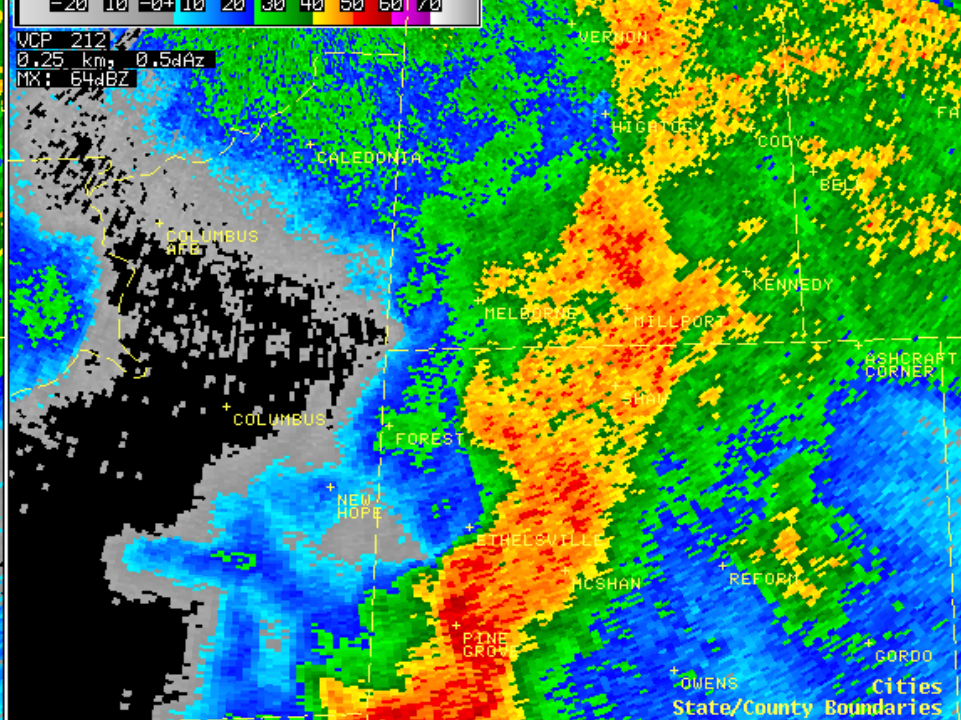
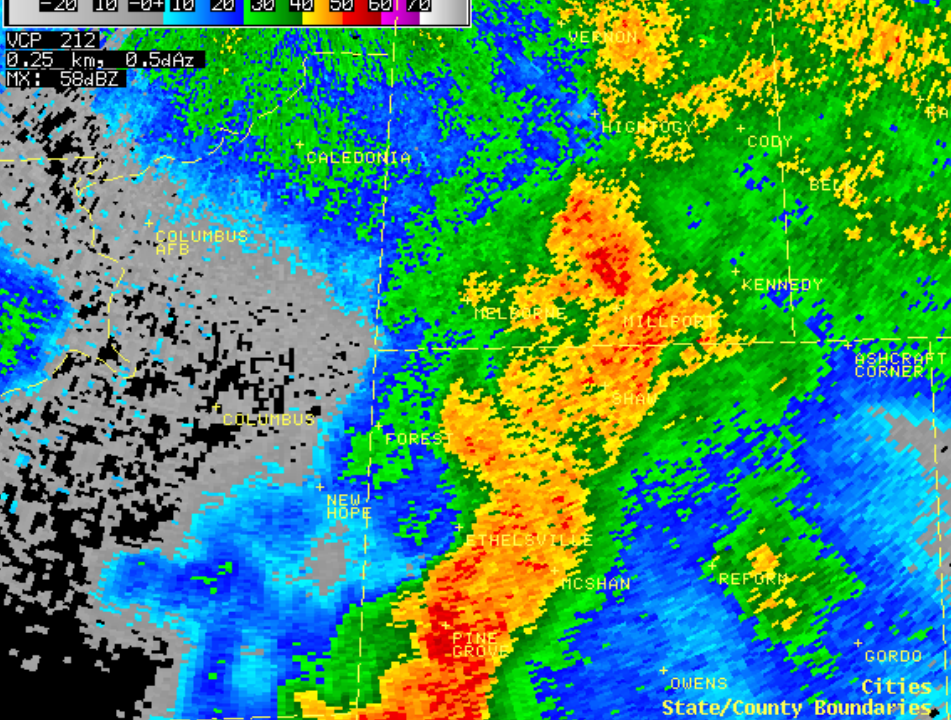


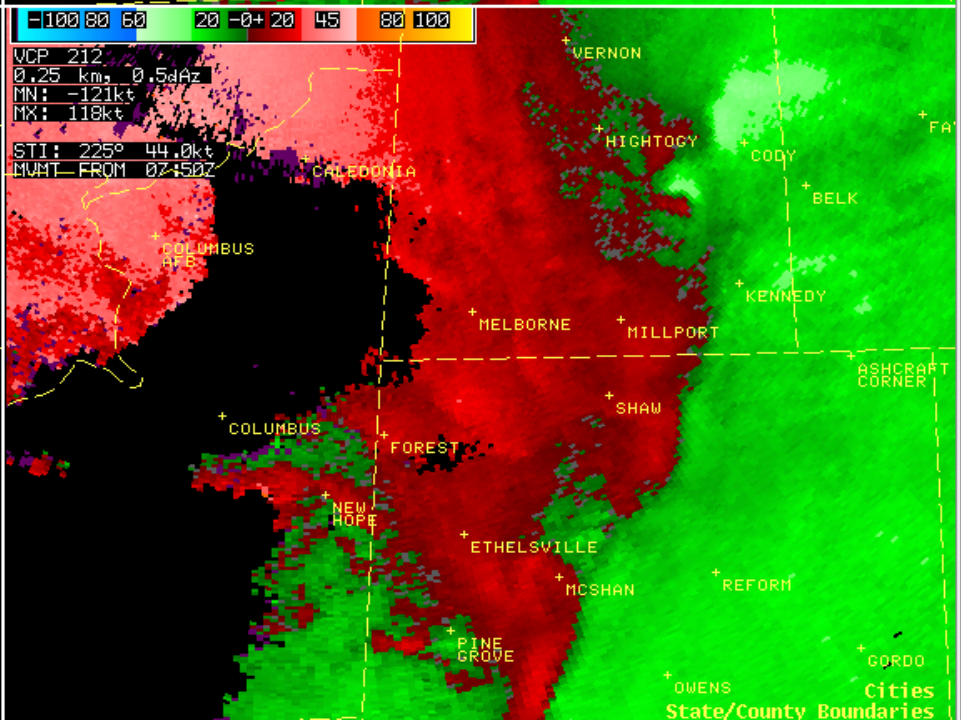
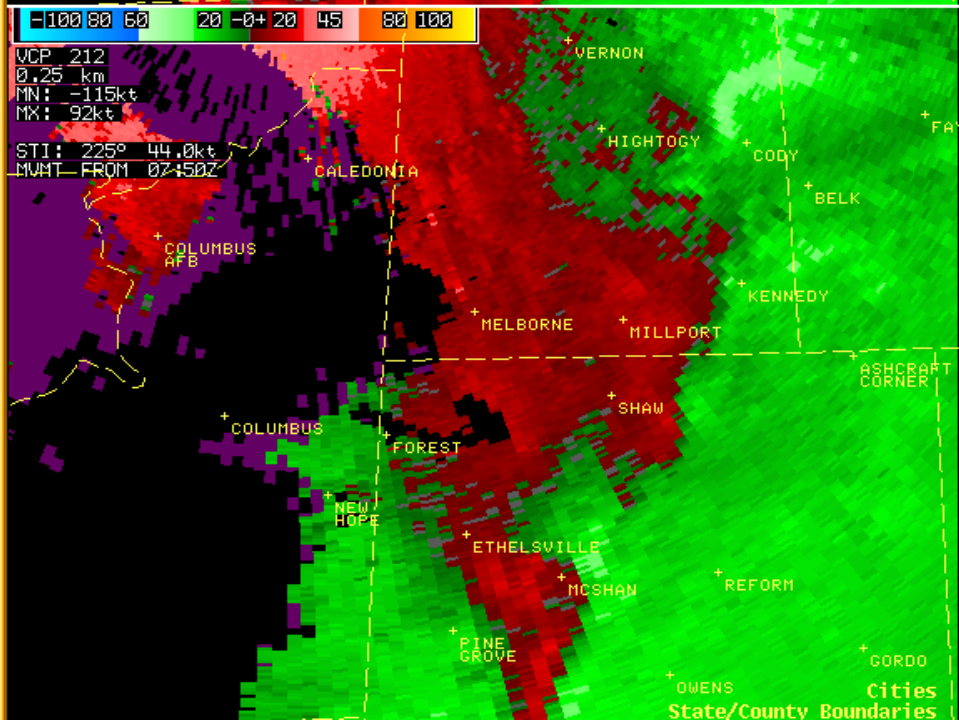
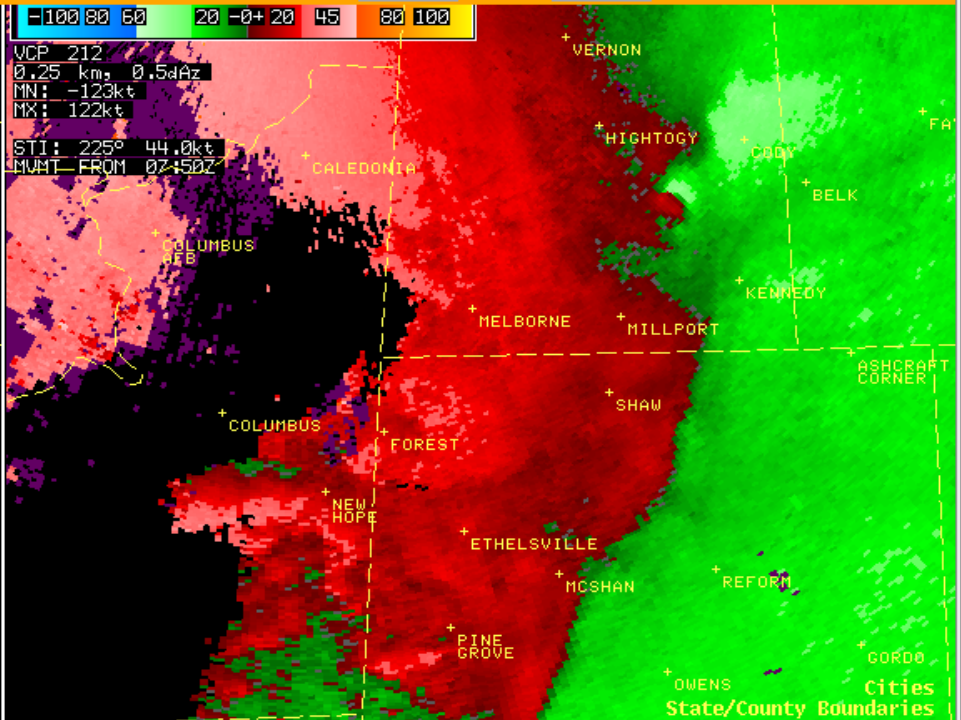
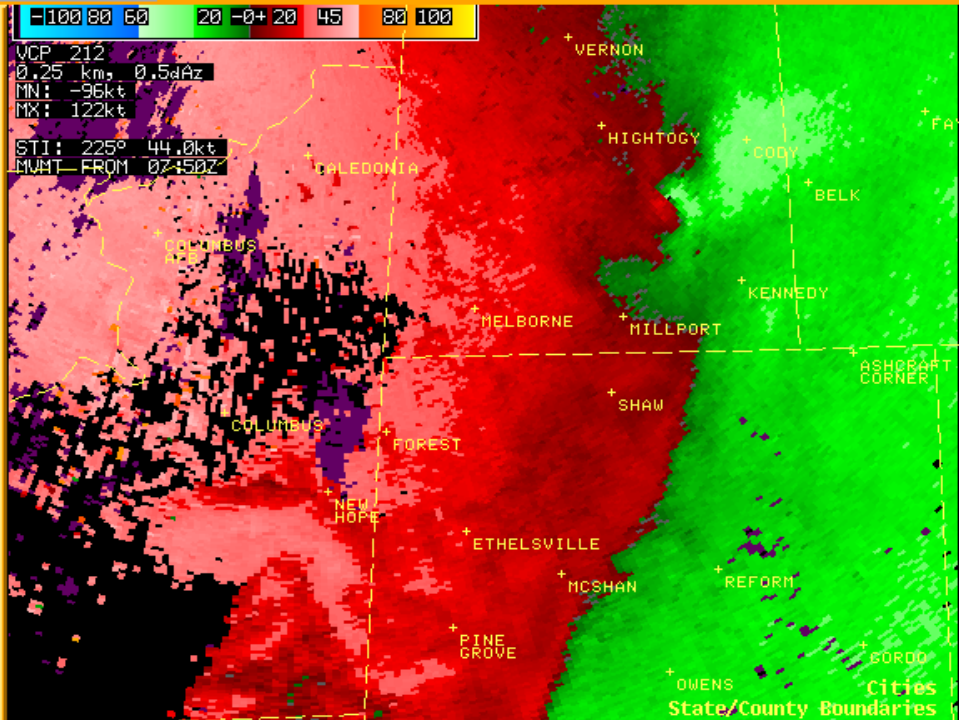
Eventual gate to gate shear or strong evidence of a possible tornado.
After survey, it was determined to be an EF1 with winds of 105 mph.











Questions or Comments?



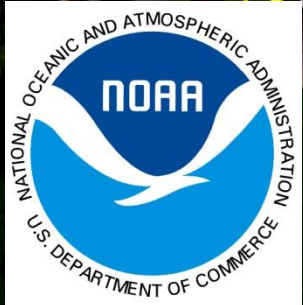
1-800-856-0758

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Kevin Laws – kevin.laws@noaa.gov

A survey will follow this presentation, please submit feedback so we can improve this presentation!



U.S. Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Weather Service – Birmingham, AL

